

337

THE

VIRGINIA EVANGELICAL AND LITERARY MAGAZINE.

VOL. I.

AUGUST, 1818.

No. VIII.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF SCRIPTURE.—No. I.

Our great purpose in conducting this Magazine, is the promotion of Religion. In prosecuting this object, we can do nothing better, than to afford such illustrations of the sacred Scriptures, as may enable our readers to peruse them with a better understanding; and, with greater facility, to learn the salutary lessons which they afford. With this view, we have resolved to devote a few pages, in every number of our Journal to the subject announced by the title above. We shall make use of all the helps within our reach; and vary our plans to suit, as well as possible, the taste of various persons. At the same time, we shall bear in mind the prevalent evil of reading in a desultory way the Bible; and endeavour to correct it.

Although the sacred volume consists of many parts, composed in different ages, and of course by different men; yet the attentive reader will perceive an uniformity of design running through the whole. In truth, the Bible contains a very extensive system; the first lines of which are to be found in the book of Genesis, and the completion, in the last writings of the sacred canon. A view of detached parts of this system, will often create great perplexities—while a comprehensive survey of the whole, will afford the most useful instruction, and the highest gratification.

We commence our labours then with the book of Genesis; and in going on, shall make a selection of such passages as, in our view, are best calculated, when taken all together, to give a connected view of the great matters treated in the Bible. According to the scriptures, God has, for a long

series of ages, had a visible church on earth. The gospel was preached to the Patriarchs as well as to us. To understand the nature of the church; the terms of the divine covenant; the peculiar relations which we sustain as members of the church; and of course the peculiar duties incumbent on us, we must go back to the foundations.—Besides; the dispensation, which, for the sake of distinction, we may denominate *peculiarly christian*, pre-supposes, in every part, a prior revelation, to which reference is continually made; and which, of course, must be understood, before we can understand the New Testament. To illustrate this remark by a single example; what idea could one, entirely ignorant of the Old Testament, have of the expression used by the Apostle Paul, “Christ our *Passover* is sacrificed for us?”

This being the case, we must begin with Moses, that we may fully profit by the teaching of Christ, and his Apostles. Here, however, we must beg leave to say—far be from us the vanity to presume that we can so explain the Bible, as to leave no difficulty unsolved. The very best understandings have been exercised on this book; and yet there are many things still to be learned. Nor is this at all wonderful. The mine is inexhaustible—or to use another figure, the ocean is unfathomable; and it is not surprising that the inch-long line of human reason has never reached the bottom. The fact is that the study of divine truth is work for eternity. Nor is this inconsistent with any preceding remarks. A system of truth but partially understood by us in this life, may exhibit, if so it may be termed, a system of practice, precisely adapted to our condition: And it is truth, intended to determine and regulate our practice, that it concerns us now to know. It was in reference to this, that we spoke of enlarged and comprehensive views; and not to the whole system of revelation, as it will be unfolded to the glorified saints, after the consummation of the divine purposes in the mediatorial kingdom of Jesus Christ.

As, in this undertaking we begin with Moses, it may not be amiss for us to offer a very few remarks on the credence to which he is entitled. This subject divides itself into two branches of enquiry. 1. What is the evidence that the books, which go under the name of Moses, were written by him? 2. What reason have we to believe that he was divinely inspired?—The first question respects the *genuineness*; the second, the *authenticity* of his writings.

The evidence, which bears on the first enquiry, is of the same kind, with that which establishes the genuineness of any other book. How do we know that *Livy* or *Tacitus*; *Homer*

or Virgil, wrote the books ascribed to them? The answer is easy—subsequent writers mention these books, under the names of the authors to whom they have been attributed; and quote them as authority, or for the sake of illustration. Now if we look into the books, which, in the Bible, follow the Pentateuch, we shall find their authors, men of the same nation, and who had every opportunity of knowing the truth, appealing to Moses, much more frequently than we find subsequent Roman writers, for instance, referring to Livy or Tacitus. And surely it cannot be shown why a Roman author should be good evidence for the genuineness of Livy's History; and the testimony of a Jewish writer should not prove that Moses wrote the five books ascribed to him.

But the evidence in favour of Moses is much stronger than this: because, he was not only a historian, but a law-giver.—His laws are recorded in his books; and, in the administration of justice, and in transacting the ordinary business of life, were as frequently referred to, as the *Revised Code* is among ourselves. It seems, then, as wayward and singular, to deny that Moses wrote these books; as it would be to deny that the Laws of Virginia were enacted by the General Assembly. It only remains by quotations to establish the practice of referring to the law of Moses. For this purpose, among other passages, we refer to the following: *Joshua* iv. 12, 13. *And the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, passed over armed before the children of Israel, as Moses spake unto them, &c.* Compare with this *Num. xxxii*, 20, 27—*Josh. xiv*, 2, and 5 and 10.—*As the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses.—As the Lord commanded Moses, &c.* See also *Josh. xi*, 12, 15—*xviii*, 7, *xxi*, 8, *xxii*, 5. “But take diligent heed to do the commandment, and the law, which Moses the servant of the Lord charged you, to love the Lord your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.” A longer list of testimonies might be produced here than is usually prefixed to the editions of the ancient classics: but these citations are sufficient. There can be no reasonable doubt of the genuineness of the Pentateuch.

The mention of the Jewish Legislator, by profane authors, might be introduced here, had we any design of entering fully into this subject. But as this is not our purpose, we only refer to the character given of him by the celebrated critic Longinus; beginning thus: “In like manner the law-giver of the Jews, no common man, having conceived worthily of the

divine power, &c. To this many additional quotations might be annexed, but our limits forbid us to enlarge.

The evidences of the inspiration of Moses are too numerous to be insisted on here. One sufficient proof is enough. We shall therefore only appeal to the prophecies delivered by him. And here to shorten the discussion, reference will be made only to the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy. We wish the student to compare this chapter with the general history of the Jews; and particularly the passage contained in verses 49-58, inclusive, with the account given by Josephus, in his history of the siege and capture of Jerusalem by the Romans. The very circumstance stated in the prophecy, are related in the history, with a minute detail of horrors which a reader of ordinary sensibility can scarcely bear.—Besides, many parts of the prophecy have their verification in the present day. The descendants of Abraham are now a distinct people. And since the destruction of Jerusalem they have been a bye-word and a proverb; a theme of reproach, and an object of scorn among all nations. With the exception of this country, they have no ease nor rest for the sole of their feet, in the various regions, whither the Lord their God has scattered them. Persecution, oppression and scorn have not forced them to give up their name, and distinctive rights: toleration, and the utmost liberality have not persuaded them to unite with those from whom they have experienced this kindness. They stand apart, a perpetual proof of the truth of the scriptures. This evidence of the inspiration of Moses, and the remark might apply to other Jewish prophets, to us appears irresistible. No man, by any human sagacity, could foresee; no man would conjecture events so remote.—We shall then assume it as true, that Moses wrote the Pentateuch; and that he wrote it under the inspiration of the Divine Spirit.

Under this impression we enter on his book. The first thing with which we meet, is an account of the creation. The object of the author, obviously, is to give such a view of the character of God as to prevent idolatry; and lay a proper foundation for that pure and spiritual service which he requires. The origin and progress of idolatry is a subject by far too copious to be entered into in this place. It may suffice to observe that in the time of Moses it had spread to very great extent. The proneness of men to this absurdity may seem strange. The rudeness and ignorance of an uncultivated age do not seem sufficient to account for it. Because, it has been practised among the most barbarous nations. It may, perhaps, be accounted for on these two principles: 1. That the objects of sense make more powerful impressions on us, than

things remote and invisible: and, in general, the ritual of idolatry is pompous and splendid. 2. For the most part, idolatry allows, and even encourages, the unrestrained indulgence of licentiousness. In this way reason has been borne down, and its plainest dictates utterly disregarded; while the most monstrous systems, encouraging the most abominable practices, have been patronized.

Idolatry is the destruction of all true piety, and all sound morality. It was worthy of a messenger of God then to set himself in opposition to this error. And, if without presumption, such limited creatures as we are may use such language, it was worthy of the wisdom and benevolence of the Deity to reveal truths calculated at once to destroy that abomination, and afford just views of the only proper Object of all religious service. Moses therefore in the first sentence of his book announces the sublime and solemn truth: “In the beginning **GOD** created the substance of the heavens and the earth.”

That something has always existed, is as evident as that something now exists. For if, ever, nothing existed; then the first Being was the cause of its own existence; that is, existed and acted, before it did exist: which is a contradiction. Some philosophers have maintained that the world itself is eternal. But this is contrary to all reason. We see as complete and decisive evidences of contrivance and design in the structure of the world, as in the structure of a watch, a clock, or other piece of mechanism. But the intelligence and power of acting no more exist in the one, than in the other. The world, as an effect, then must be ascribed to the great first Cause; the **JEHOVAH**. This conclusion cannot be avoided, without the unnecessary, and of course unphilosophical supposition of more than one eternal, self-existent Being. The best conclusions of reason, then, agree with the proposition contained in the first sentence of the Bible. Still, however, man, without a revelation, has universally been ignorant of the one living and true God. Be it known, then, is the language of the Jewish legislator, that one great and glorious being, the Lord God Almighty, created these heavens, which shine in all their effulgence over our heads; and this earth, with all its beautiful variety, all its adaptations to the condition of its inhabitants.—This most important truth is admitted, though in very vague terms, by some who think that they see difficulties in the Mosaic account of the Creation, which cannot be solved. Let us look a little into this subject.

But let it be remarked, that creation is a subject on which we have no experience—we can perform no experiments—

we can make no induction. We ought then to enter on the examination of it without prejudice; and with the humble spirit which becomes such short sighted beings.

In the first place, then, Moses affirms that God brought that into existence, which did not exist before, namely, the substance of the heavens and of the earth. No proposition can be more intelligible than this; nor any more worthy of belief. In the next verse, the condition of the substance of the earth after creation is stated—it was without form and void; a rude chaotic mass, having all the elements intermingled without arrangement; and the deep, that is the fluid exterior part, covered with darkness. That this was not the case, no one can affirm. We receive the truth, then, on the credit of the inspiration of Moses: not doubting but that God, who knew the state of his own work, communicated the truth to his servant.

The sacred historian next relates, in a very concise manner, the various changes which took place, until man was formed to dwell on earth. The power of the Creator produced a motion in the surface of the waters. It is not stated precisely in what manner. But if the rotatory motion was then given to the earth, the effect here mentioned, would be brought to pass. This too would cause the changes afterwards distinguished by the terms *day* and *night*. For any thing that we know, however, the rotatory motion was slower at the commencement, than afterwards.

At this stage of the process, God delivered the command, which, as announced by the sacred historian, has always been admired for its sublimity. “*Let light be; and light was.*”—According to the doctrine of natural philosophers, light is a substance *sui generis*, in the highest degree diffusible; and in fact almost universally diffused. It is one of the most important agents in the economy of nature; indispensible for the life, or at least the health, both of animals and vegetables. This substance was extricated from the chaotic mass, during the first revolution of the earth; and seems to have been so embodied, as to afford its influences only to one hemisphere at a time.

During the second revolution of the earth, the atmosphere was formed; and doubtless, was loaded with the vapours, with which, ever since, it has been charged. The reader is here requested to observe, that the word rendered *firmament* in our common bibles, is, in the margin of the large family bibles, translated *expansion*. And a more suitable term could scarcely be found to designate atmospherical air; it being almost indefinitely expansible. The remarks offered above,

explain the separation between the waters and the waters, mentioned by the sacred historian.

The formation of the atmosphere, and the immense evaporation which must have immediately followed, greatly aided in the separation of the earth and the water, so that the dry land might appear. This having been effected, the way was prepared for the existence of vegetable life. Accordingly during the third revolution of the globe, the various tribes of grasses, shrubs, and trees, were created by the Almighty; in all of which are richly displayed the wisdom and goodness of the Creator.

Hitherto the action of light and heat had not been so determinate as to suit the condition of the world in its completed arrangement; and therefore, during the fourth revolution of the earth, God prepared those bodies in the heavens, the sun and the moon, for dispensing light and heat throughout the system; the great luminaries for ruling the day and the night. This remark, perhaps, solves a difficulty which some have thought very formidable.—“Light,” they say, was created on the first day, and the sun on the fourth—This looks much like a contradiction.” But the objection supposes that the sun is the cause of light; whereas, it seems to be the agent for its regular distribution. As soon as the process of creation required this regularity, provision was made for it; the luminaries of heaven were prepared.

Preparation being now made, creatures having animal life were brought into existence; but such only as are not very perfectly organized, or are of lower order. The water brought forth their swarms; and such fowls as fly in the air were created. This was the work of the fifth day.

By the operation of natural causes, under the direction of the great architect, the earth was fully prepared for the accommodation of the animals that have their habitation continually upon it; accordingly they were created. And finally man, the lord of the lower creation, was brought forth in the likeness and image of God his maker. Thus, on the sixth day, the work of creation was completed.

In this account, all is distinct and intelligible. The history is concise; but, considered as an annunciation of a series of facts, remarkably clear. In these several events which took place, one is manifestly a preparation for that which succeeds it; and the whole corresponds with the best discoveries of the most enlightened philosophy.

To all questions, why has not God done this or that? We are disposed to answer, by another question—Who art thou, O, man? The remark of the celebrated Saurin, may, however,

very well be introduced here:—That the Almighty created the heavens and the earth in six days, rather than instantaneously—not because it was easier for him to do so; but because thus we are enabled to form more distinct conceptions of the operations of his power; and more fully understand his ways, whom to know, is life eternal.

To this it may be added, that the detail given by Moses, is admirably calculated to answer the great purpose which he had in view. That this may be evident, we offer to the reader the following facts and remarks. It is notorious that among the ancient idolaters, particularly the Egyptians, almost all the objects of nature were objects of worship. The sun, the moon, and the host of stars; the earth, and sea; animals, reptiles, and vegetables were acknowledged as Deities. “The Egyptians conceived matter to be the first principle of things, and that before the regular forms of nature arose, an eternal chaos had existed, which contained, in a state of darkness and confusion, all the materials of future beings. This chaos, *which was also called Night, was in the most ancient times, worshipped as one of the superior divinities.*” Juvenal, in his fifteenth Satire, thus derides the superstition of that people, We give the translation of Owen.

Our limits forbid a farther detail on this subject. Comparison of the facts just stated, with the first chapter of Genesis, will show how wisely the narrative there given is adapted to the purpose of the Jewish Legislator. Because, matter was held to be eternal, Moses states that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth; and because, sun, moon, and stars, and other objects of nature, were worshipped, the sacred historian enters into a detailed history of creation.—

And doubtless, because the *Night* was worshipped as a great divinity, it is particularly noticed that Jehovah separated between light and darkness; and called light, day; and darkness, *night*. This plain statement, was in place of a thousand arguments, to convince the children of Israel of the absurdity of idolatry; and to persuade them to worship the one living and true God, the maker of heaven and earth. And it is worthy of remark, that no sagacity of man; no power of reason, has been able to exclude that abomination from the nations to which the light of divine revelation has never penetrated.

Finally, although we by no means pretend to have solved the difficulties connected with the account of the creation; we think that enough has been done to shew, that the cavils of infidelity are misplaced; that it becomes us to receive, with gratitude, the salutary instruction which the bible affords; and that it is our duty to diffuse, as widely as possible, a book which has conferred blessings of such importance on all to whom it has been communicated.

REMARKS ADDRESSED TO YOUTH.

We have always taken a lively interest in the welfare of the young; and would gladly promote their improvement. For this purpose, we shall occasionally address directly to them, in terms both of candour and affection, such admonitions and exhortations as appear to us important. We hope that they will appreciate our motives, and lend an ear to our counsels. We have ourselves passed the dangerous road, in which they now travel; are acquainted with its perils; and at each place of danger, would set up a beacon for their warning. We would say, here lurk fierce banditti, who, relentless as death itself, make their assaults on unarmed and unguarded youth, and beat them down to swift destruction.—And there sport syrens, whose pleasant songs, and potent enchantments dissolve the soul; destroy every manly purpose; and extinguish every lofty feeling.

The dangers to which the young are exposed, arise in general, from that corruption of human nature, of which all, of every age and condition, partake. We very often hear, indeed, “of the innocence of youth.” But such language is contrary to all experience, as well as to scripture. “As soon as they are born they go astray, speaking lies,” is the declaration of the Bible; and all who have carefully observed the propensities of children know the truth of the assertion. Comparing early

with advanced age, we see much more offensive exhibitions of depravity in the latter than in the former: but still it is true that we are the degenerate children of degenerate parents; and from our very youth, need the restraints of wholesome discipline.

The young are not only exposed to common dangers; but to some, peculiar to their situation; against which it is the part of benevolence to warn them. These arise from ignorance and inexperience; from great ardour of feeling, and impetuosity of passion. It is not, however, mentioned as a reproach to this age, that it is ignorant and inexperienced. In the earliest stages of our existence, we can scarcely do more than feel; and it is only by slow processes that we acquire knowledge. At first, we do not know the most obvious properties of the bodies which surround us; for instance, that fire will burn. And even after we have made some little progress in knowledge, we are ignorant of the necessity of laying restraint upon our appetites; and foolishly think, that because a thing gratifies the taste, the more we take of it the better. Thus children often injure themselves by excessive indulgence; and foolish fondness will not interpose to prevent it. This is the commencement of those habits of self indulgence, and hatred of control, which so often bring ruin on the young.— Accustomed, at a very early age, to gratify every appetite, when farther advanced in life, they expect to indulge every inclination; and are by no means disposed to submit to restraint. Hence arises a spirit of insubordination and refractoriness, at once in the highest degree troublesome to those who have the management of youth; and very disastrous in its effects on the future adult. Hence the painful inference, that some of the most urgent dangers to which the young are exposed, arise from the mistake or neglect of parents in relation to domestic discipline. Time perhaps was, when the error lay on the other side. At present, however, there is no reason for apprehending excessive strictness or rigour in the management of the young. Were this danger apprehended, we should be among the first to raise our warning voice against it. But the fashion of the time sets in quite a contrary direction. Perhaps the mistake has originated thus: The most just and precious principles of civil and political liberty, which have been cultivated, and established, and (thank Heaven) maintained among us, have been carried into the system of domestic economy; under the impression, that the most efficient method of training youth to enjoy and maintain the rights of freemen, is, to suffer them to be free when boys.— But it ought to be considered that in proportion to the liberty

enjoyed in a community, the habits of self government and self restraint in individuals, ought to be strong and permanent. Under such a constitution as ours, the sentiments and habits of the people, do in fact govern the people. From them, laws emanate; and under the same influence are they carried into execution, as far as this is done at all. Our attachment then to the principles of our government, and all our desires for their permanence and stability, ought to lead to a course entirely different from that which has been pursued. The system of education ought to have a reference to our situation. The young should not be accustomed to act under the influence of fear, as the slaves of a despot; but be taught, by a wise and salutary course of discipline, voluntarily to submit to restraint, and obey authority; to govern themselves; to respect the aged; and reverence the laws.

We are convinced that one of the greatest dangers to which the young are exposed in this country, arises from the want of a proper course of such discipline as we have mentioned. It is then the more necessary that they should be warned, and earnestly intreated to form, for themselves, habits of self control. It is easy to see that unrestrained indulgence brings ruin. And it is equally obvious that he, who has no settled principles of self denial, is in most imminent danger of destruction. Hard then as the precept may appear to some, we can see benevolence and wisdom in the daily mortification which the gospel enjoins. We by no means insinuate that Christianity cuts off the enjoyments of life, and forbids all pleasure. But we maintain, that he is likely to make most of life, who habitually enquires, not, what will afford gratification—but, what is duty?

After these general remarks, we shall proceed to specify some of the passions and affections, the indulgence of which is injurious; and to which the young are exposed. And in the first place we notice *Vanity*. This is thought to be silly and troublesome, rather than dangerous. But in our opinion it is all together; and not more a subject for ridicule than pity.—Certainly, if we were disposed to “crack our satiric thong,” we should desire no finer subject, than a belle, with her bonnet, “high up and poking;” or a *corsetted* beau, looking for all the world like an hour glass, with the head of a waxen doll stuck on one end of the frame, and a forked stick inserted in the other. But we are not in the humour, at present, to notice this sort of trifles. Yet were it not for the idea of the ridiculous attached to them, we might in sober sadness, and with a deep feeling of melancholy dwell on them. For this folly when once it gets strong hold of the mind, as completely prevents improvement, and excludes all serious thought, all regard

to God, and heaven, and eternity, as the most malignant passions of the human heart. An immortal being thus occupied, reminds one of him, who bore the magnificent title of Emperor of the world; and who, having equipped a mighty army for the reduction of a rebellious province, on coming to the shore of the ocean, employed, for a time, himself and his hosts, in gathering marine shells; and then returned to the imperial city to claim a triumph! Shame on him, and on his memory! is the universal cry. But here are immortal souls, sent into the world, not merely to consult temporary interests however magnificent; but to acquire a deathless fame, a victory over sin, and a triumphal crown, the splendours of which will brighten through the ceaseless ages of eternity—and they are employing the energies of their minds, their high and noble faculties, about the colour of a dress, the cut of a coat, the fashion of a bonnet!

Vanity implies an inordinate desire of approbation or admiration from those with whom we associate. It is a vice of the mind to which corrupt nature is exceedingly prone; and which the course of education among us has a strong tendency to encourage. The practice of virtue, and abstinence from vice are more frequently enforced by the question, What will others think? than, by considerations of right and wrong. And certainly this will very early form a habit of referring more to the sentiments of our associates, than to the rule by which we are to be judged. Now it is easy to conceive a number of cases in which the effect of this habit is in the highest degree disastrous. A young man has often violated his conscience, his sense of decency, and the feelings of others, by profanity; to show himself a lad of spirit. The same motive has often led to intemperance and debauchery. But perhaps a desire of admiration for intellectual force and originality, has as frequently wrought mischief, as any other operation of vanity. This has induced many, who have the appearance of grave philosophers, to advance the most extravagant and injurious sentiments.—And often the stale and worn out objections of infidelity, that have been handed down, with a pharisee's love of tradition, century after century, are repeated now with wonderful flippancy, and assurance by young men, who wish to be thought wiser than their fathers. Such indeed has been the extravagance of this passion, that men have been found ready to sacrifice at its shrine, all the consolations, and hopes, and everlasting glories of religion—Nay, all that prophets foretold, apostles taught, and martyrs sealed with their blood—all the lessons that the great high Priest of our profession has afforded, are to be rejected and laughed to scorn; that the votaries of

infidelity may receive the applause of the vain and superficial. Let the young beware of vanity.

Allied to this is the passion of pride. As vanity respects the sentiments of others, pride has regard to ourselves. It is thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought to think; and claiming for ourselves more than we have a right to claim. It may operate in reference to our condition in society, to our moral qualities, or our intellectual endowments. We are prone to indulge this passion in its various modifications; and in all respects, we receive injury from it. When we compare ourselves with others, and stretch ourselves above them, the lordly feeling is apt to bear down and destroy the charities of life. Compassion, and all the kindly sympathies of our nature, are uprooted and we become morose, selfish and cruel.—Again, he who does not pay all, that so important a being as the proud man claims for himself; must be called to answer for it: the injury, which may be only imaginary, or at most very slight, must be atoned for by a sacrifice as costly as any made to the Syrian or Indian Moloch. This Demon always delights in blood—the blood of friends.

In turning from this horrid scene, we meet a spectacle less shocking indeed to nature, but not less disastrous in its ultimate consequences. An overweening opinion of our moral worth is perhaps one of the most common errors in a thoughtless, sensual age; and when we regard the whole of man's existence, perhaps no error is more fatal. Our standard of moral excellence is low; shame and reproach do not follow vices which almost all commit; hence those, who are by no means as pure as the vestal, by no means as temperate as the anchorite, who never need fear hatred because they are called by every body, *the just*; think themselves fully as good as they need be; boast of their excellence, and celebrate the goodness of their own hearts. If this were a mere folly, it would not be worthy of notice—but the effect in relation to religion is most unhappy. This pride of morality (small as is the cause) sets men in opposition to that scheme of religion which, in its fundamental principles, and in all its adaptations, implies the depravity of our nature, our ruin and misery. We would therefore warn our young friends against it, as against destruction. Not that we would have any person to undervalue the true dignity of our nature. But wherein does it consist? In our capacity of knowing, serving, and enjoying God; in the right use of our faculties in reference to the end of our creation; in having a capacity to enjoy the pure delights of heaven. And this arises from the grace of God afforded in

the gospel of Jesus Christ. He, who under these influences, has his heart raised to heaven; and, relying on redeeming grace, aspires to glory, honour, and immortality, consults the true dignity of his nature. As to any other, it is all the figment of pride.

But there is not only a pride of morality; but of understanding, against which we are to be guarded. There is scarcely any thing which men covet more than the reputation of genius, or great intellectual power. This has very often led to very ridiculous mistakes as to the common affairs of life; and very fatal ones in relation to the true religion. The assumption that we must comprehend every thing which we believe, is one which gratifies the pride of the human understanding, and often affords a plausible pretext for casting off the restraints of religion; but it is founded as much on ignorance as on pride.—On ignorance of the boundaries of human knowledge; of the nature of evidence, and the proper office of reason. This is a subject on which we must not now enter. But it is one of very considerable importance, and well worthy of investigation by those who have the capacity. The only remark which shall be offered is, that the examination which has been recommended, will terminate in the conviction that the proper office of reason is to judge of evidence; and that we do, in the legitimate exercise of our faculties, believe thousands of truths, which are as really beyond the limits of human comprehension, as the highest mysteries of religion. The epicure and sensualist, while they riot in their enjoyments, know no more beyond the fact, that their wine, and their dainties afford temporary gratification; than they know concerning the highest parts of that religion at which they scoff.

There is nothing which more misbecomes such erring, short-sighted creatures as we are, than those assumptions of intellectual power which are so common in the world. We affectionately warn the young against pride of understanding; and exhort them to cultivate a docile and humble spirit, as the surest to lead to true wisdom, and true happiness.

In proportion to the liveliness of our feelings, the impressions made by external objects are strong. Youth is a season of great ardour. The objects of sense deeply impress the young. They are intent on their pursuit; and keen for present gratification. From this arises another danger to which the young are exposed.—The danger is, of forming habits of sensual indulgence. In this we include much more, than the mere grossness of debauchery which is often expressed by that term. We extend it to the various enjoyments which essentially depend on some object of sense for their gratification;

and we would distinguish them from the pleasures which arise from the exercise of our intellectual powers, and from the consciousness of endeavouring to discharge our duty.—These are the pleasures which in every sense of the term are most valuable. It is deplorable when they are rejected, and rational beings are looking for their enjoyments to that alone which delights the eye, which captivates the taste, or is agreeable to the feeling. When habits of this kind are formed, the pleasures of intellect, and of a good conscience are not sufficiently pungent to please—Something more stimulating is required, and is sought, and will be had; until intemperance and debauchery get the complete ascendency, and lead their victim to swift destruction. We would therefore most earnestly warn our young friends against the habit of mere gratification of the senses; and exhort them to cultivate their moral and intellectual powers.—Let much of their leisure time be employed in reading the lessons which history teaches; in treasuring up the examples of high virtue and warm piety, which are recorded in the annals of the truly illustrious; in studying the precepts of a pure morality, and of a heaven descended religion. Thus will they enjoy a pure and simple pleasure, and at the same time exalt their own character, and qualify themselves for future usefulness.

In hurrying these remarks to a conclusion, we cannot but caution the young against idleness. There are, in our country, many young persons, whom their parents do not compel steadily to pursue any course of business. Occasional employment is perhaps found for them; but much time is allowed for taking pleasure. At any rate nothing irksome is required; and if business must be followed, one thing and then another is tried, until the novelty is worn off; and then some new scheme is adopted. Thus the habit of fickleness, and irresolution is completely established. This unsteadiness is attributed to the climate: We believe unjustly. It is chiefly the operation of moral causes that form the character. We are then exceedingly anxious that the youth of our country should be kept to steady employment. Mere drones ought not to be tolerated in the republic. He is not a good citizen who is not industriously engaged in some useful pursuit.

One of the earliest lessons repeated in our ears was expressed in the Latin sentence: “*Cave segnetiem, quæ segneties est inimica virtuti.*” Beware of idleness; it is inimical to virtue. The whole course of our observation and experience, has confirmed this truth to us; and we are verily persuaded, that a man cannot be useful, virtuous, or happy, unless in devotion to the pursuits of honest industry.

Theology; Explained and Defended, in a series of Sermons. By Timothy Dwight, S. T. D. L. L. D. Late President of Yale College. With a Memoir of the Life of the Author. In five volumes 8 vo. Vol. 1. Middleton, (Con.) Clark & Lyman, 1818.

We have read this volume with great delight. It is some time indeed, since we have been waiting for its appearance, with no common expectation. It was our happiness, in youth, to hear the whole work from the lips of the author himself, who was certainly one of the most eloquent and gracious speakers we ever heard; and his memory is entwined with all the best and dearest feelings of our hearts. We were, of course, very naturally anxious to see it in another form; and we have been amply gratified in the perusal of the part before us. We miss, indeed, while we read, that fine commanding figure, and fair open countenance of the author, which used to charm us from the desk, (though we can almost fancy him present;) and that clear sweet voice that gave new interest to the message of the Gospel. But we still enjoy all the better qualities of his mind and genius, as they are embalmed in his pages; and the very bones of Elisha we find, have the power of life in their touch. The work indeed, in our judgment, has great and peculiar merits, for all who have minds to relish its worth.

And, in the first place, we think, we can hardly value it too highly for its clear, sound, and orthodox views and expositions of the doctrines of our religion. In some few respects, indeed, the author's sentiments differ from our own, and from the articles of our church; but then, they differ only in unessential and chiefly unimportant particulars; very clearly within the limits of lawful liberality to indulge. On all the main cardinal points of the faith, they breathe the very spirit of our best standards; and what is of infinitely greater importance, of the word of God.

In the next place, we must warmly applaud the general strain of reasoning and discussion, as eminently happy. It is at once profound and acute, and yet plain and simple. Indeed, we think our author, with all his visible talent for refined and scholastic speculations, has been fortunate in simplifying the abstruseness of his subjects, and familiarizing them, as far as possible, to the minds of his readers. At least, he appears to us entirely free from that vicious subtlety, which is, at once the *forte* and the *foible* of many of our New England divines, of the metaphysical tribe; a race of men, by the way, not unlike the antient schoolmen; of whom Sir Walter Raleigh complains, that they spin into small threads with subtle

distinction, many times, the plainness and sincerity of the Scriptures; their wits being like that strong water that eateth thorough, and dissolveth the purest gold." At the same time, his reasonings are strengthened by various information. Like Elihu, *he fetches his knowledge from afar; and ascribes righteousness to his Maker.* Thus his arguments and proofs are drawn from a wide range of reading and observation; and all the stores of Nature and Philosophy, are occasionally opened to maintain the service of Truth. The illustrations, particularly, are really such—not mere explanations—they render the subjects luminous as well as clear.

With all this, the work is excellent for its style. The general tone of the language is plain and simple; but rising easily, and naturally, with the claims of the subject, into the finest strains of real eloquence. The author is not a mere logician; but has fancy and heart about him while he argues. Of course, he is never satisfied to leave his subjects in the nakedness of abstract discussion; but clothes and adorns them as he goes along, with a thousand dresses and decorations, from the wardrobe of his own poetic genius. In this respect, particularly, we think, the system is superior to any with which we are acquainted. It is not, like the work of Gill, or Ridgeley, a mere *body of divinity*, as it is called; but a *living soul*, and a *quicken^g spirit*.

But above all those merits of the performance, we admire the pure spirit of Christianity, which breathes through all its pages. Our author is indeed always firm and decided in his own opinions, yet liberal and indulgent to those of others; at least where they do not affect the very essence of faith. He discovers too, a tender and affectionate solicitude for the best interests of his hearers, and never loses an opportunity to enforce his reasonings by proper appeals to the heart. His exhortations are accordingly frequent, and often excellent, particularly, by the way, for their force and variety of topics, and their freedom from all cant and common-place. In a word, that love which is the principle of the Gospel, pervades the whole work, and diffuses a charm about it which is always felt, though it can never be described. It is a fine, genial air, which operates silently and invisibly, but strongly and delightfully upon us; and while it mediates to exhibit all other objects in their happiest forms, contrives to insinuate its own pure sweetness into our hearts. And so much for the general merits of the work: we pass on to say something a little more particular of the part before us.

This first volume treats of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity, Divine Decrees, Creation, and Providence,

including the Probation, Temptation, Fall, Sentence and Depravity of Man. Upon the proof of the existence of the Deity, we, of course, see but little that is new; though the old arguments are well stated, and ably maintained. In the first place, *the existence of things* proves the being of a God. This position, of course, turns upon the connexion between cause and effect, which is quite sufficient to support it. It is true indeed, as Hume insidiously remarks, this connexion is not intuitively perceived, at least so far as relates to external objects; but it is not the less certain on that account. It is, in fact, clearly established by uniform and universal experience; from the testimony of our senses; and the consciousness of our minds. It is, besides, inwoven in the very texture of our language, in all our trains of thought, and habits of feeling; so that our understanding cannot even realize the supposition of existence, or change, without a cause. Surely then, this truth may be regarded as the basis of reason, as well as of religion; and we must take leave of both together. But, secondly, the being of a God is further proved from *the state of existing things*. "The existence of all the forms and states of being which we behold in the universe, is plainly derived; because it is a change in the former state of things, commencing, continuing, and terminating; and, as it is impossible that any being should commence its own existence, derived certainly from an extrinsic and adequate cause. This cause can be no other than God." Our author pursues the idea through several illustrations, and having clearly established his doctrine, proceeds in the second discourse to consider the objections of others, which he ably refutes. In the third, he triumphs over them in an eloquent exposition of the unhappy and degrading tendency of their views and feelings, contrasted with those of Christians.

Our author now proceeds to consider the attributes of the Deity in their order, which he establishes with great force of argument, and beauty of illustration. In particular, he devotes the eighth sermon to the proof of the benevolence of God, from the works of Creation and Providence; and adorns the subject with some of the happiest graces of his manner. In the way of his reasonings upon this topic, he comes of course to encounter the objection arising from the existence of moral evil in the world. And here maintains: 1. That God cannot be proved to be the efficient cause of sin; and justly adds that such a doctrine ought not to be admitted without proof: 2. That it cannot be proved that God was obliged, either by justice or benevolence, to prevent sin from existing: and 3. That "it cannot be proved that

the existence of sin will, in the end, be a detriment to the universe." But here, it is obvious that our author only evades the objection, without pretending to satisfy its doubts. Indeed, he confesses himself "utterly unable to explain this subject, so as to give an enquirer clear and satisfactory views, by the light of reason; of the propriety of the introduction of moral evil into the intelligent system." He only means to shew, that "no proof can be drawn from this source against this attribute in the Creator." But is not this in fact an admission, that the light of Nature is not sufficient to establish the existence of this attribute, at least in its perfection? The truth is, we apprehend, that so far as the light of Nature is concerned, we can see very clearly that much evil exists, which God indeed has not directly caused; but which yet, for any thing that appears, he might have easily prevented. And why did he not prevent it? Or why does he not now cure the enormous evil, by a single touch of his sovereign hand? Is it consistent with perfect benevolence to permit the existence of unnecessary evil, which of course includes the idea of pain and suffering? And how was evil necessary at all, or at least in the degree in which it actually exists? That this evil indeed, may possibly lead to good in the future world, we can readily believe, because we see some proofs of such a process, even in the present. But could not the same degree of good, or even a greater, be made to exist without any evil at all? Who can prove that the utmost possible degree of happiness will be enjoyed by any of us hereafter, or that all of us might not enjoy more than we shall, without the memory of past, or the knowledge of present distress? And again, it is conceded that the light of Nature is certainly sufficient to teach us that all men are sinners before God; but can it teach us that God will pardon sin? Our author himself says in another place, "whether the mercy of God will extend to the final forgiveness of sin, and the future communication of happiness to man, cannot be determined by reason, from any considerations within its power." (p. 195.) But how then can his benevolence be proved from the light of Nature? Viewed by that light alone, must he not appear to have permitted great evils which he might have prevented, and for which he has provided no certain remedy? For our own parts, we confess we are glad to get away from all these doubts and perplexities, by following our author through his next discourse, in which he proves this attribute from revelation. Here indeed, we discover a place of rest for our minds and hearts. Here at last, we can believe, and we trust feel too, that *God is love*; and join our author

in the fine rapture, with which he exults in the overflowing fullness of the proof.

[“This divine disposition is the boundless energy of the infinite Mind; the intense and immeasurable love of doing good, unceasingly, and endlessly, producing that happiness in which it delights. It creates, with an activity never wearied, and never discouraged, means to this glorious end, without number, and beyond degree, fitted with a diversity incomprehensible, to effectuate in the most perfect manner this eminently divine purpose. It is a tree which, planted in this distant world, reaches the highest Heaven; adorned with branches endless in their multitude, covered with leaves and blossoms of supernal beauty, and loaded with fruits of life and happiness countless in their number, unceasing in their succession, and eternal in their progress: while all the innumerable millions of percipient beings approach, and eat, and live.” P. 153.]

[In the 13th sermon, on the wisdom of God, our author brings before us a variety of very happy illustrations of this attribute, which we recommend to the careful perusal of our readers. We regret, indeed, that we cannot transfer some of them to our own pages; but they are rather long for this purpose, and are besides best kept together. We can only quote the conclusion, with which he winds up this last discourse upon the attributes of God.

“I have now finished,” says he, “the observations which I proposed to make on the existence and perfections of God; and considered this vast subject, as it is presented to us both by Reason and Revelation. What an amazing character is here manifested to our view. Jehovah, the self-existent, eternal, immutable, omnipresent, omniscient, almighty and independent; the only good, just, faithful, true, merciful and wise; the Maker, the Preserver, the Benefactor, and the Ruler of all things: *to whom be glory for ever and ever.* What a Character, what a Being, is this! How do all creatures in his presence, and in comparison with his greatness and perfection, shrink into nothing, and become justly *counted to him as less than nothing and vanity!* How truly, how suitably to his character, does he say, *I am; and there is none else!*—How wonderful a Cause must He be, from whom all things are derived! How divine an Architect must He be, who with *his finger laid the foundations of the earth, and built his stories in the Heavens!* How amazing a Ruler, *who doth according to his will in the armies of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; whose hand none can stay; and to whom no being may say, what doest thou.* How exalted

a Benefactor, *who giveth unto all, life, and breath, and all things!* How perfect a God, who conducts his immense kingdom along the ages of eternity, with ever increasing glory, happiness and perfection!

“Seraphim and Cherubim, Thrones, Dominions, Principalities and Powers, feel no employment, no honour, no happiness, so great, as to worship, serve, and glorify God forever and ever. With wonder, awe, adoration, and transport, they surround his throne, *veil their faces, cast their crowns at his feet, and cease not day nor night, crying Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, who wast, and who art, and who art to come.*

“If men possessed the disposition of angels, their employments, their views, and their happiness would in substance be the same. No Polytheists, no Atheists, no Infidels, would ever have disgraced the human name. To this end, no enlargement of our understanding is necessary. A mere change of disposition would convert this world into one great temple of Jehovah; in which *one faith* would command and control, *one worship* ascend, *as the odour of sweet incense, from the rising of the Sun to the going down of the same. Holiness to the Lord would be written* on the hearts, the lips, the employments, and the pleasures of the great family of *Adam*. Every heart would glow with love and rapture; and every hill and valley become vocal with praise. In all his wonderful works, God would be sought and seen, acknowledged and glorified. Every being and event would be viewed only as a manifestation of God, and the universe contemplated as a vast picture, exhibiting in forms and varieties innumerable, the wisdom and power, the benevolence and amiableness, the beauty and glory, of Jehovah.” P. 220—2.]

We are now brought to the consideration of that most important and difficult subject, the Decrees of God, which our author manages with great skill. His views indeed, are often original and striking, as well as just and profound. He maintains in substance, that “all things, both beings and events, exist in exact accordance with the purpose, pleasure, or what is commonly called the Decrees of God:” and he undertakes to explain the doctrine, to prove it, and to answer the objections against it. In pursuing the explanation, he observes among other things, that the decrees of God are strictly sovereign; but yet not arbitrary or capricious.

“The decrees, and the conduct, of God, are sovereign, in the true and scriptural sense; viz: *that he does according to his will, independently and irresistibly, and that he gives no account of any of his matters, any farther than he pleases.*

Still it is equally true, *that he wills nothing without the best reason*; whether that reason be disclosed to his creatures, or not. Real glory to himself, and real good to his creation, not otherwise attainable, furnish the reason of the divine choice, whether it respects the existence or motions of an insect, or the conversion and salvation of a man. The kind, the degree, the manner, and many other things, are either wholly or partially unknown to us; but the good is always in view, and always the reason of the divine determination." P. 227—8.

He next proceeds to prove the doctrine, by several unanswerable arguments. The proof from Scripture, particularly, is, we think, absolutely conclusive. He shews too, very clearly, that those who deny the doctrine must of course be driven to maintain, "that God is a limited, mutable, and dependent being; and that he originally was, and ever must be uncertain of the accomplishment of the great end proposed in his works; or rather, that he ever was, and will be certain that it can never be accomplished." For our parts, we fully believe that if men were always as jealous of the glory of God, as they are of their own imaginary rights, all objections to this doctrine would soon vanish away.

In the mean time, our author comes to answer these objections, which he does with great ability. He denies particularly, and with good reason, that this doctrine makes God the author of sin, that is, in the sense that he constrains or compels his creatures to sin: a thing, by the way, impossible in itself. His observations upon this subject are highly valuable; but too long to be quoted. He next considers the objection, "that this doctrine destroys the free agency of rational creatures." And here he attempts, with singular dexterity, to untie the Gordian knot of divines: indeed, if he has not entirely succeeded, it is because, we are satisfied, this knot can only be cut by *the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*. The absolute certainty of all events, will probably always seem to conflict with the freedom of human choice. In truth, it is not easy for us who maintain both points, to escape the charge of inconsistency and self-contradiction, from those at least who will not give themselves the trouble to consider the grounds of our belief. And yet it is plain that the Scriptures teach both; and we are satisfied to believe them on their authority, without demanding better. To be sure at the same time, we must admit that we cannot believe a contradiction; and we equally admit that it would be a contradiction to believe that all events are at once *constrained* by God, and yet *freely chosen* by man. But we contend that events may be *ordained*, (that is certainly ordered,) without being *constrained*.

And here, after all, lies the fallacy by which our adversaries seek to perplex us, and really deceive themselves: they choose to take it for granted, that events cannot be *certain*, without being *necessary*. But this is their mistake, contrary to sound philosophy, and the witness of the Scriptures. Philosophy tells us, as our author clearly proves, that God could create a free agent whose actions should be certainly ordered according to the pleasure of his Creator. And why is not man exactly such a being. But the Scriptures are absolutely explicit. “*It must needs be*, says our Saviour, that offences come;” and yet it is added, “but woe to that man by whom they come.” “Him,” says Peter, “being delivered by the *determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God*, ye have taken, and by *wicked hands* have crucified and slain.” (Acts xi, 23.) We acknowledge, indeed, after all, and without any difficulty, that our language is too vague and our understandings too dull, to trace the line of distinction between *certainty* and *necessity*. But still we can see clearly that there is such a line; and that is enough for our purpose. Hereafter, perhaps, our vision may be strengthened to see it more distinctly; and then we are persuaded, all doubts will be removed. In the mean time, we are well satisfied to rest our faith on this article of our creed, upon the sure word of God.

Our author is more entirely happy in answering the common objection, that this doctrine “discourages all the efforts of mankind towards reformation.” His remarks on this point indeed, are excellent, and we cordially recommend them to the attention of all who hold the opinion which he combats. It is, in truth, very clear to us, that the objection is founded purely in a misconception of the doctrine itself.

The kingdom of God, as established by his pleasure, is a kingdom of means regularly connected with their ends. I do not perceive that this is less true when applied to spiritual, than to natural things. The real discouragement which men generally labour under with respect to their spiritual concerns, is their indisposition to make any efforts for the attainment of salvation. In truth, this indisposition itself suggests the discouragement, which I have obviated, and then admits it. To a dispassionate, unbiassed mind, it would never gain admission. By sober Reason it was never devised, and can never be supported.

“Were God really unwilling that men should strive; had he discountenanced efforts; had he established no means of grace; or had those means, when anxiously and perseveringly used, failed of success; there would indeed be ample room for well founded discouragement. But when we find,

as in my view we do in fact find, all these things reversed in the good pleasure, and providence, of God; we have every inducement to hope and to labour much more, it would seem, than from any supposable situation in which all things were left to fluctuation and casualty. Stupid sinners have indeed, according to this and every other scheme, the most fearful reason for discouragement and terror. But such as are awokened, anxious, and engaged, to seek eternal life, have solid and abundant reason for hope." P. 255—6.

[The several sermons which soon follow upon the subject of Creation, are of a finer order; at least so far as style and manner are concerned. They are indeed fair specimens of a mild and serene eloquence that, like the firmament itself, expands and elevates our minds with the fine show of the various lights which it displays. We can quote only one or two passages, taken almost at random, as samples of the whole. The following account of those happy natures, the Angels, is worthy of the author, and of his subject.

"How delightful an object of contemplation is this glorious Order of beings! All things pertaining to this illustrious subject, are cheering, luminous, animating and sublime. The very names assigned to Angels by their Creator, convey to us ideas pre-eminently pleasing, fitted to captivate the heart, and exalt the imagination; ideas only cheerful, refined, and noble; ideas which dispel gloom, banish despondency, enliven hope, and awaken sincere and unmixed joy. They are *Living Ones*; beings in whom life is inherent and instinctive; who sprang up under the quickening influence of the Sun of Righteousness, beneath the morning of everlasting day; who rose, expanded, and blossomed, in the uncreated beam, on the banks of the river of life, and were nourished by the waters of immortality. They are *Spirits*, winged with activity and informed with power, which no labour wearies, and no duration impairs: their faculties always fresh and young; their exertions unceasing and wonderful; and their destination noble and delightful, without example and without end. They are *Burning Ones*; glowing with a pure and serene, with an intense and immortal, flame of divine love; returning, without ceasing, the light and warmth which they have received from the great central Sun of the Universe, reflecting with supreme beauty the image of that divine Luminary; and universally glorious, although differing from each other in *glory*.

"The place in which they dwell, is perfectly suited to their illustrious character. It is no other than the Heaven of Heavens; the first and best world that will ever be created; the place where God himself delights peculiarly to dwell; the

house where Virtue, Peace, and Joy, dwelt in the beginning, and will dwell forever; the throne of boundless dominion, the parent city of the great empire of Jehovah; the happy region where all things are verdant with life, and blossom with immortality.

“The station which they hold is of the same cheerful and elevated nature. It is the first station allotted to created existence. Those sublime Intelligences, are the immediate attendants of Jehovah; the nobles and princes of the Universe.—All their employments, all their allotments, are honourable and happy; all their destinies, dignified and divine.

“Angels then, present us with an object of contemplation, replenished with inherent light, beauty, and greatness; with nothing to tarnish, nothing to impair its lustre; nothing to alloy the pleasure of the beholder: a vivid landscape, formed of all the fine varieties of novelty and greatness, without one mishapen, decayed, or lifeless object, to lessen its perfection: a morning of the Spring, without a cloud to overcast it: a Sun without a spot, shining only with the various colours of unmixed light.” P. 307—8.

[In the sermon on Man, we are treated with a fine description of our nature before the fall.

“How illustrious a being was Man as he came from the hands of his Maker. With what dignified attributes was he endued? For what high pursuits was he qualified! To what sublime employments was he destined! In him was found, in an important sense, the *End* of this earthly system. Without Man, the world, its furniture, and its inhabitants would have existed in vain. Whatever skill, power, and goodness, were displayed by the Creating hand, there was before the formation of Man, none to understand, admire, love, enjoy, or praise, the Creator. The earth was clothed with beauty: the landscape unfolded its delightful scenes: the sky spread its magnificent curtains: the sun *travelled in the greatness of his strength*: the moon and stars solemnly displayed the glorious wisdom of their Author: without an eye to gaze, or a heart to contemplate. A magnificent habitation was indeed built and furnished; but no tenant was found. Brutes were the only beings which could enjoy at all; and their enjoyment was limited to animal gratification.

“But Adam was separated from all earthly creatures, by being formed an Intelligent being. His mind could trace the skill and glory of the Creator in the works of his hands; and from the nature of the work, could understand, admire, and adore the workman. His thoughts could rise to God, and wander through eternity. The universe was to him a mirror,

by which he saw reflected every moment, in every place, and in every form, the beauty, greatness, and excellence of Jehovah. To Him, his affections and his praises rose, more sweet than the incense of the morning ; and made no unhappy harmony with the loftier music of Heaven. He was the Priest of this great world ; and offered the morning and evening sacrifice of thanksgiving for the whole earthly creation. Of this creation, he was also the Lord : not the Tyrant, but the rightful, just, benevolent Sovereign. The subjection of the inferior creatures to him, was voluntary ; and productive of nothing but order, peace, and happiness. With these endowments and privileges, he was placed in Paradise ; no unhappy resemblance of Heaven itself : and surrounded by every thing *which was good for food, or pleasant to the eye, or fragrant to the smell.* In an atmosphere impregnated with life ; amid streams in which life flowered ; amid fruits in which life bloomed, and ripened ; encircled by ever living beauty and magnificence ; peaceful within, safe without, and conscious of immortality ; he was destined to labour, only that he might be useful and happy, and to contemplate the wonders of the universe, and worship its glorious Author, as his prime and professional employment. He was an image of the invisible God ; created to be like him in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, his most illustrious attributes ; and like him, to exercise dominion over the works of his hands.

“In this situation also, removed far from death and disease, from sorrow and fear, he was formed for endless improvement. His mind, like that of Angels, was capable of continual expansion, refinement, and elevation ; and his life, of perpetual exaltation in worth, usefulness and honour. God was his Visitor ; Angels were his companions.

“To complete this system of delight, he was created to be the Parent of countless millions, who, like himself, were all to be sinless. They were also to inhabit the same world of peace, life and happiness ; to possess the same immortality ; and to share in the same endless enjoyment. At the head of this lower creation, he was to stand, and survey this great globe filled with his own offspring ; and to see the whole immense family, like himself, children of God, and heirs of his everlasting love.” P. 373—5.]

The two sermons which follow, upon the nature of the human soul, are at once ingenious and profound. In the first of them, entitled “The Soul not Material,” the author displays an intimate knowledge of his subject, and handles the weapons of Philosophy with great adroitness and success. In the other, he gives us a masterly refutation of this wild hypothesis.

which maintains, that the soul is only a chain of ideas and exercises. The reasoning, by the way (if we must call it so,) by which this tissue of folly is supported, appears to be the same in principle with that which the ingenious and fanciful Berkeley employs to disprove the existence of the material world; and is indeed, at least equally absurd.]

The several sermons upon Providence, display much useful information, and generally in *sound words that cannot be condemned*. The discourse upon the Temptation and Fall, is we think, particularly able. We are a little surprised, however, to find our author supposing that our first parents were ignorant of the existence of the Tempter, and so inclined, almost naturally, to believe his suggestions. This, at least, is not the opinion of Milton, (the best of poets, and not the worst of divines,) and we cannot help thinking that his account is both more probable, and more just to the character of God. In our author's way of treating the subject, we apprehend that we are led to feel a little more pity for their crime, than it fairly deserves. [After this, he considers the question, (rather *foolish* indeed, if not *unlearned*,) how man being created holy, could become sinful? and answers it with his usual good sense.

“God created a moral being, capable, in the nature of things of either sin or holiness. Originally, this being was holy; that is, disposed to obey the will of God; possessing a state of mind propense to virtuous, and opposed to sinful conduct. Fitted by his moral nature to be operated on by motives, as all moral beings are, he was placed in a world filled with motives, of which some induced to obedience, and others to disobedience. Wherever the means of happiness and misery exist, such motives exist of course, and of both kinds; for these means themselves are the motives; or perhaps more properly the happiness and misery are the motives. Now it is plain, that in such a world, (and all possible worlds, except a world of perfect misery, must be such,) motives of both kinds must, at times, be present to the view of such a being. It is equally evident, that some of the motives to sin, may, considered by themselves, become to such a being stronger inducements to action, than some of the motives to holiness. In other words, higher enjoyment may be found, or expected, in some courses of sin, than in some courses of holiness. That, to a mind capable of contemplating one or a few things only, at once, and of feeling with different strength, at different times, the motives to sin may chiefly, or alone, be present, will not be doubted. For, it is apprehended, no finite watchfulness is sufficient to realize, with absolute

certainty, the full presence of the motives to holiness at all times; nor to keep out of view all the motives to sin. Of course, every such mind may, for aught that appears, be induced by some supposable motive, or combination of motives, at some times, and in some circumstances at least, to yield to temptation, and disobey. P. 457—8.]

[Here also our author considers the different schemes of accounting for the introduction of sin, and warmly opposes that hypothesis, which strangely, if not wickedly, maintains that God creates the sinful volitions of his creatures. His own opinion, as already mentioned, and in which we fully concur, is, that God only permitted sin to exist. But why did he permit it? This is, indeed, a natural and most important question; and our author answers it in the very spirit of the Scripture.

“Probably the best answer ever given to this question in the present world, is that which was given by Christ, concerning one branch of the divine dispensations to mankind: *Even so Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.* It was a dispensation approved by infinite Wisdom, and seen by the Omnipotent eye to be necessary towards that good, which God proposed in creating the universe.

“The restless and roving mind of man is, however, often unsatisfied with this answer. I will therefore, add, by way of explanation, and, I hope, with that profound reverence which all creatures owe their Creator, and that diffidence which becomes a creature of yesterday, that if Adam had not fallen, Christ would not have redeemed mankind: for had there been no Apostates, there could have been no Redeemer, and no Redemption. The mercy of God, therefore, the most perfect of his attributes, and the consummation of his excellence, would have been unknown to the universe. All the blessings, bestowed on mankind, would have been the reward of the obedience of Adam, and his posterity. But the blessings bestowed on glorified saints, are the reward of the obedience of the Eternal Son of God. These rewards could not have been given, had not Christ obeyed: and Christ could not have obeyed, had he not become the substitute for Sinners, or the Mediator between God and apostate creatures. These rewards also, will differ from those in the former case, as the respective persons who obeyed, differed in the excellence of their characters, and the value of their obedience.

“Had Adam obeyed, it is, I think, highly probable, that the original world would have continued, and the present Heavens. The new Earth and the new Heavens which will be created after the Mediatorial Kingdom is finished, would never

have been. No human beings would have been admitted into Heaven. None of that joy would have been experienced, which now springs up in heavenly minds over the repentance and salvation of sinners, and which will increase and brighten forever. None of those things *into which Angels desire to look*, would have been brought into being, nor would that glorious purpose of the creation of all things, mentioned by the Apostles, the knowledge acquired by *Principalities and Powers in heavenly places, concerning the manifold wisdom of God*, disclosed in his dispensations to his Church, have ever been accomplished.

“By the redemption of Christ, Heaven as well as Earth, Angels as well as Men, are materially changed from their former circumstances, and character. Nay, the whole immense and eternal kingdom of Jehovah, by means of this amazing work, assumes a new aspect; and both Creation and Providence, are invested with a new character. God is seen by his intelligent creatures in new manifestations of beauty, glory, and loveliness. Throughout never ending ages, virtuous minds will be enlarged with knowledge, exalted in holiness, and improved in dignity and happiness, beyond all which would have otherwise been proper, or possible; and their affections, obedience and praise, become more refined, and more elevated, in a rapid and regular progress. The former legal system, therefore, of which the primitive state of Adam was a part, had comparatively *no glory, by reason of the excelling glory* of the system of redemption..” P. 461—3.]

[In the 29th sermon our author discusses the important subject of the Universality of Sin, and maintains, that “in consequence of the Apostacy of Adam, all men have sinned.” This proposition he undertakes to prove from revelation, and from facts. The laws, religion, writings, and conversation of all mankind admit, no example of human perfection has ever been found to deny, and the hearts and consciences of men confirm, the truth. In the next sermon, he continues his argument, and illustrates his doctrine from another fact, the rejection of the Word of God by mankind.]

In the 31st sermon, which is the last in the book, we have an able essay upon the *degree* of human depravity. And here we are happy to find his sentiments so sound and scriptural, on a subject of so much importance in the system. We are aware indeed, that this doctrine of the sinfulness of our nature, is often warmly opposed, chiefly by persons who give us all the time the strongest illustration of its truth; and to be sure, we must admit that it is not very palatable to human pride. At the same time, we are fully persuaded, that rightly

understood, and properly explained, it is indisputably true, and lies at the very foundation of all real religion. Our author, accordingly, in handling the subject, admits, "that the human character is not depraved to the full extent of the human powers." He allows further that "there are certain characteristics of human nature which, considered by themselves, are innocent," and even "amiable." But still he insists, (and here lies the true substance of the doctrine,) that "there is not in the mind, by nature, or in an unregenerated state, any real moral excellence, or angelical virtue." And such, we take it, is the language of the Scriptures. *The carnal mind*, (that is, human nature in the flesh, unrenewed by the spirit, *is enmity against God; not subject to his law, neither indeed* (so great is its depravity,) *can be*: without the converting energy of grace. But our author proceeds to observe, that "the heart of man, after all the abatements are made which can be made, is set to do evil in a most affecting and dreadful manner." This point he argues with his usual force, from the assertions of Scripture, the state of the human disposition as revealed by the consciousness of every individual, and the whole course of human conduct. On this last topic particularly, he observes among other things, that the pleasures and amusements of mankind are striking proofs of extreme depravity in our nature. We should be glad to quote the whole of the passage; but can only spare room for a partial extract, the last we shall make.

"Let me then ask, what are the actual pleasures, usually sought with eager favouritism in countries claiming the title of Christian? Go to the *table* where *provision* is professedly *made for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof*; and you will find one answer to the question: What a circle is very frequently seated around it? Or rather, what does that circle in many instances become, before the table is deserted? To pass the enormous expense, care, and anxiety, with which nature and art are employed and ransacked, to gratify the demands of a sickly and fastidious palate; in how many instances, throughout even the civilized and Christian world, is a feast the mere resort of gluttony and drunkenness? How swinishly are the overflowing bounties of the Infinite God abused to the prostitution of Man to the destruction of his health, the waste of his time, the perversion of his talents, the neglect of his duty, the corruption of his heart, the stupefaction of his reason, the loss of his usefulness, and the ruin of his soul? How many drunkards, think you, my brethren, have been found in a single century, the most enlightened and improved, since the beginning of the world, and in the countries

inhabited by Christians, around the festive boards of the well-informed and polished members of society? How many more gluttons? What a scene of low and vulgar brutism, at the same time, is daily presented by taverns, ale-houses, and dram-shops; and on days of public rejoicing and festivity?

“Turn we here to the *Horse-race*; another darling diversion of mankind; and not of the ignorant and clownish only, but of the enlightened and polished; nay, even of the noble and dignified ranks of men. What has gathered the concourse? The professed object is to see two or more horses run a race, and one outstrip the other in his speed. Without calling in question the lawfulness of setting these animals upon the stretch of their powers for our amusement; what a picture is presented to our view by the bets which are laid, the fraud and falsehood practised; the purjuries, oaths, curses, and blasphemies uttered, the drunkenness and sloth which are indulged; the battles which are fought, and the universal prostitution of morals, which is accomplished.

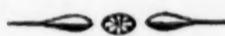
At a *Cock-pit*, another darling scene of amusement to vast multitudes of mankind, all these gross and dreadful iniquities abound; together with a cruelty causeless, shameless, and horrid; a cruelty impossible to that *righteous man who is merciful to his beast*, and of course to every harmless creature in his power.”

“From these humiliating scenes, direct your steps to the *Gaming table*. I need not tell you how chosen a diversion, or set of diversions, is found here; or to what an incomprehensible extent sought in every country, civilized and savage. Here, fraud in every form begins, carries on, and closes the business. Here, is the chamber of moroseness, gloom, discontent, animosity, profaneness, contention, drunkenness, and universal depravity. Here, property is wickedly lost, and wickedly won. Here, time is most shamefully and sinfully wasted. Here, all duties are most dreadfully neglected; and here, the estate, the health, the character, the family, and the soul are consigned to perdition.

From the gaming table, turn your researches next to the *Theatre*. Think, first, of the *almost uniform character* of the miserable wretches who are trained to create the diversion: How low are they, almost without an exception, fallen; and how low do they fall, of course, by the deplorable employment to which they are most wickedly tempted to devote themselves? If you are at a loss, read a history, or even a professed panegyric, of this class of mankind. You will find it filled up with crimes, which disgrace the name even of sinful Man, and with characters, which are a blot even on this

guilty world. Consider, next, *the Performances*, which these unhappy men and women are employed to exhibit. How few can be read without a blush, or without a sigh, by a person not seduced by habit, or not lost to virtue, and even to sobriety? How great a part are mere means of pollution? What art, labour and genius, are engaged in them to garnish gross and dreadful vice; to disguise its nature and effects; to robe it in the princely attire of virtue; and to crown it with the rewards of well-doing? How often is even common decency insulted, ridiculed, and put to flight? In how many ways, and with how much art, is corruption softly and secretly instilled into the soul? In how many instances is Virtue defaced, dishonoured, and, like the Saviour of Mankind, crowned with thorns, sceptered with a reed, and mocked with pretended and insolent homage." P. 534—7.]

Such is a brief notice of some of the chief points in this part of the work, which has only increased our desire to see the rest. We shall, of course, anxiously wait its appearance from the press, and perhaps indulge our readers with some further extracts from its pages. In the mean time, we heartily recommend the whole to the fair and faithful perusal of all enquirers after truth. The subjects discussed in it, are certainly worthy of all attention; and wise indeed must be the man who cannot receive instruction from the lessons of Dwight.



BRIEF ARGUMENT FOR REVELATION.

It is unreasonable to suppose that God is excluded from the world which he has made. He has not lavished to exhaustion the means of displaying his glory. No exertion of his power has produced a creature so constructed and so furnished, that all his energy and all his light have been expended upon it. Nor has any intelligent creature been thrown from his hand into an obscurity so retired as to be inaccessible to his visits. He may approach us in what form and for what purpose he please. And in order to the attainment of his object, in a manner consistent with our moral nature he may address to us all that is important and impressive in a divine communication. Surely reason exiled from the bosom of a mortal, leaves her throne to be occupied by folly, when he calls in question the *possibility* of a revelation from God.

The capacities with which man is furnished were not opened in vain. On him no tendency has been impressed, to which there is not adapted a corresponding object. It would be a reproach on the power, or the wisdom, or the goodness of the

Creator to suppose that he has awakened in the bosom of his creature, intellectual or spiritual desires without having provided the means of giving to them adequate satisfaction. As light is pleasant to the eye, so is knowledge to the mind. We have indeed no reason to believe that God will reply to every question which a perverted curiosity may propose. But surely he cannot behold us anxious for information of the utmost consequence to us, without intending to bestow it upon us. To the thirsty soul he will open those refreshing streams which can flow from none but himself. At this stage of our investigations we regard the presentment to man, of a communication from God, as an event *extremely probable*.

In contemplating the nature and condition of man, we receive the impression that he is born to some high destiny. Did nothing more than is detailed in the accomplishments of this life, await him, it had been sufficient for him to have possessed less of the image of his maker. The faintest lineament of that image which he bears, could not have been traced upon him, that it might be eaten out by the hungry grave. Solid as such conclusions appear, we feel them to tremble, when we undertake to place upon them the weight of our future calculations, and our future hopes, and our future selves. We are not contented when we have ascertained that a future existence is allotted us. We wish to know whether that existence shall be immortal. Is an eternal duration necessary to the balancing of the account of the present life? May we not ultimately be reduced to nothing? Or shall we endure, the imperishable monuments of Jehovah's skill? From the perilousness of our present condition, shall we infer that ours, hereafter, shall be a destiny of disaster or of glory? Do the one and the other lie before us, as their respective elements shall be combined by the labors of life? How shall those scales be adjusted into which we shall at last be flung? How shall we escape all from which we shrink, and realize all for which we pant? Had no ray from "the Father of lights" fallen upon our world, these questions would have remained forever unanswered. Of a state so deplorable we have an enfeebled specimen, in the condition of Pagan nations who yet seem to retain some perverted remains of an original revelation. As it must accord with the purpose of God, that on these interesting subjects we should be enlightened, so none but God can enlighten us—Here then in the progress of our pilgrimage, to the temple of truth, we plant our feet firmly on that doctrine which asserts the *necessity* of a divine revelation.

Our acquisition of knowledge is a progressive work. Many slow and painful steps must be taken before we reach the retirement which it inhabits. As our unfolding powers are exerted, one addition is made after another to the sum of our attainments. Very different from ours, there is reason to believe, were the circumstances of the first man. Without taking for granted, at present, the truth of the Mosaic history, it is certainly allowable to suppose that he was created in full vigor of body, and full maturity of mind. Established in his sovereignty over this lower world, while the hand that made and upholds him is hidden from his notice, what can we learn of his origin or his destiny? After all his searchings, he can find nothing but conjecture. The perfection in which he may have possessed his rational powers, could not repeal the law which was intended to regulate the mode of their employment. And without more materials than belonged to himself, it were vain to commence his trial of the efficacy of those powers. Destitute of an adequate number of established principles, on the subjects to which his reasonings should refer, he could bring out no undeniable results. Now if he did receive knowledge, the means of acquiring which, by his own unaided efforts were not at his command; and if that knowledge have been ever since, actually in possession of the world, the inference is fair that a divine revelation has been made.

In proceeding to establish this fact, the sentiment is announced, that if the first man in all the glory of intellectual perfection had been abandoned to himself, he could never have acquired the idea of a spiritual being. The

correctness of this opinion may be inferred, from the incompetency of all human means to give him the possession of the idea in question. Without means adequate to that end he could never possess it, unless indeed it be innate. And the opinion, that it is so impressed upon him that he cannot but receive it, involves the admission that it is obtained by a method equivalent to revelation. How then, if in the commencement of his enquiries, he be destitute of the notion of spirit, shall he obtain it? Exclusive of supernatural means, there are but two methods of acquiring ideas. The informations of our senses open to us one avenue to knowledge. But as spirit is obvious to none of our senses, they could never convey to us its ideas. All our other mental acquisitions are derived from the operations of our minds. The mind has no powers of creation. It cannot work without materials. The materials for its first employments are derived from without. But no arrangement of the ideas of sensible objects can produce the idea of spirit. The difficulty will not be removed by the concession, that matter for the subsequent exercise of the mind is furnished by the previous operations. For this exercise of the mind, for which the idea of spirit is sought, either involves this idea, or it does not. If not, the search will be in vain: but if it do, then that search was needless; for the idea to the attainment of which it was directed, was previously possessed. If, with all the operations of the mind under his eye, the materialist refuses to admit that the human soul is spiritual, much less would these operations suggest to him the first conception of spirit. But previous to this first conception, every man will necessarily be a materialist. How often has the world contentedly ascribed certain effects to imaginary causes. When the true cause is once ascertained, it may be very easy to discover that inadequacy of an imaginary cause, to the production of the effect ascribed to it, which before had not been suspected.—No process of reasoning can discover to us a new idea; the elements of which were not previously in the mind. As the idea of spirit is uncompounded, it cannot result from any modifications of our previous conceptions. The object of reasoning is not the discovery of ideas, but of their relations. To ascertain whether there be such a thing as spirit in the world is fairly within the scope of our reasoning powers.—But before we proceed to reason about spirit we must be in possession of its idea. We admit the possibility of its existence, or we should make no enquiries about it. But this presupposes our having some conception of that object, concerning the existence of which our enquiries are employed. Without this, it were impossible to construct a proposition, or

to reason on the subject.—Now if there were no means by which the first man, whose unimpaired intellectual powers promised the highest possible discoveries, should of himself acquire the idea of spirit, much less could that acquisition be expected of any of his degenerate sons.—A statement shall be made of what has been published to the world as a fact. A man who was born deaf and dumb exhibited such indications of piety, that he was admitted to the reception of the Lord's supper. By an operation he subsequently received his hearing and his speech. He then most solemnly declared that he never had one idea, not merely of the spirituality, but of the existence of God. To what source then, if not to the unassisted powers of the human mind, shall we refer those ideas of spirit which have prevailed in every age and in every nation?—Undoubtedly to instruction. And that instruction, coming originally from God, must have been a revelation. Its essential nature can in no respect be varied by the manner of its communication. Whether it be delivered immediately or intermediately, by oral tradition or by writing, it is still a divine revelation. We may consider, therefore, our possession of a revelation from God, not merely as *possible*, as *probable*, as *necessary*, but as *certain*. Here then in our journeyings we erect a pillar, to mark our progress; and we leave upon it this inscription: *Divine revelation not a conjecture, but a fact.*

The expectation is reasonable that a revelation from God would be attested by adequate evidence. And no greater degree of evidence can be demanded than will be sufficient to satisfy the anxious and candid enquirer for truth. It could never be the purpose of God to address it with such force, as to constrain the belief of the indifferent and the reluctant. When the Bible is presented, as containing the precious revelations which God has made to our race, its acceptance is not demanded without evidence. Its external evidence, embodied chiefly in prophecy and miracle, has often been developed with a conclusiveness of argument, which has never been refuted. And its internal evidence, which needs not, on any principles of fairness, to be conceded to its adversaries, not only proves that it is worthy of God, but that it came from none but him. If however the principles be admitted, to establish which an attempt has now been made, it will follow that even unanswerable objections against the scriptures do not invalidate their claim to the character of a divine revelation. We are bound to receive something as such, since a revelation has actually been made to the world. Now assuredly “this thing was not done in a corner.” If there be in the world, any thing more worthy than the Bible of being

received as a revelation from God, surely some hand would, before the present period, have dragged it into light. Who pretends to say that any thing is known in the world, that deserves to contend for precedence with our Scriptures? Let the hand be extended to receive the holy gift. To believe and to obey the Bible, shall be an imperious duty, until something else can be found in the shape of a revelation more worthy of God and more useful to man.

A. H. G.

ESSAYS ON DIVINITY—No. V.

Evidences of Christianity.

When Mohammed was about to embark in the strange enterprize of imposing *a new*, or rather *an Eclectic religion*, upon the world, he endeavored to engage, as his assistants, the most influential characters of his acquaintance. Nor was it before he had obtained the assurance of several *powerful auxiliaries*, that he ventured to assume to himself the character of *a prophet*. Widely different was the conduct of the great author of the *Christian faith*. It was not the rich, or the learned, or men of name and superior influence, but fishermen and mechanics, that he selected to be the ministers of his religion, and his witnesses before the world. Let us hear these chosen witnesses, then, and weigh their testimony in the balance of impartial criticism.

And here the first inquiry which claims our most serious attention is—“Were the apostles perfectly acquainted with the subject of their testimony?” And this interesting inquiry, we may, without hesitation, answer in the affirmative. For the apostles were ear and eye witnesses of the facts which they relate.

They were disciples; and not only disciples, but constant attendants, also, upon the public ministry of their Lord and master; accompanying him from village to village, and from country to country. They heard him preach righteousness to assembled thousands; and they saw his miracles—the glorious works which he performed in his own name, and by his own power, in attestation of his *divine mission*. They were members of his family; nay, the apostles were admitted to the distinguished honor of being numbered among his most *confidential friends*. They must, therefore, have known him well; his person, his features, his mien, and his voice, as well as his conversation and conduct, both in private and in public, must have been familiar to them. One of them, at least, was a witness to his sufferings upon the cross. And after his resurrection,

they all had the happiness to see him repeatedly; and not only to see him repeatedly, but to converse with him familiarly, during the space of forty days; nay, they were permitted even to eat and to drink with him; and what seems still more remarkable, unbelieving Thomas was invited to put his finger in the print of the nails, and to thrust his hand into his side in order that he might obtain all the evidence which the most incredulous could desire in a case of such importance. Now, is it possible that a stranger would have assumed, so exactly, the person, the features, the mien, and the voice of Jesus Christ, as to deceive the apostles in this instance—as to impose himself upon them for a friend with whom they had been so long and so intimately acquainted—and that after such frequent interviews for the space of forty days? This, surely, will not be imagined.—But the apostles were, it appears to us, allowed evidence of the resurrection of their Lord and master still more irresistible. Yes, they saw him ascend to Heaven until a cloud received him out of their sight. And could there be any imposition or deception in a case of this nature! And, what appears to us a consideration absolutely conclusive in the case under consideration, they had from him the promise of miraculous gifts to qualify them for the arduous duties of the apostolic office—and miraculous gifts of such a description, that they must have known assuredly, whether this promise was fulfilled or not. But we need not enlarge upon this subject. The arguments already adduced must be sufficient to convince every impartial inquirer, that with respect to the facts which the apostles have related, and most solemnly attested, it was absolutely impossible for them to have been deceived. Nor have we any just reason to suspect their sincerity, or to call their veracity in question.

It is certainly more natural for all the earth—for the most abandoned, as well as for the most upright—to speak the truth than to utter falsehood. Falsehood, known deliberate falsehood, is not only a great crime, but it is a crime which no man can commit without doing great violence to his own nature. What, then, shall we think of falsehood which is not only known and deliberate, but obstinately persisted in for days, and weeks, and months, and years!

What possible inducements could the apostles have had for acting a part so unnatural, as well as base? Not, surely, a regard for the reputation of an *Impostor*.

It was in the first instance, the hope of crowns and sceptres, or, at least, of great honors and emoluments, that induced the apostles to forsake all and follow Christ. Had they, then, been so miserably deceived and disappointed, and that

by a man in whom they had reposed the most unsuspecting confidence; how must they have been affected towards him? Would they have been disposed to suffer the loss of all things, life itself not excepted, for the power of one who had deceived and ruined them? It is impossible.

Are they then to be considered enemies to their own species? Would they have been at such immense pains for the base purpose of deceiving their fellow men in a matter of such vast importance? Degenerate as human nature confessedly is, it is not so degraded as to be capable of any thing of this nature.

But the love of fame is a powerful passion in the mind of man; a passion at whose shrine many have not only hazard-ed, but even sacrificed their lives. True! but did any one ever sacrifice his life in attestation of a known and injurious falsehood, for the sake of fame? That such a number of plain artless men should be thus enamoured with this airy fantom; this “shadow of shadows,” is utterly incredible. We must be permitted to add, that there is no reason to suppose an individual of these witnesses so weak as to be capable of expecting success, in so desperate an undertaking. No, Reader; from their utmost exertions in such a cause, these primitive witnesses could have had nothing to expect but poverty, and disgrace, and persecution, and that without any recompense either in this life or in that which is to come. And was it possible for them, would it have been possible for any man, to have made the sacrifices which they made, and to have undergone the toils and hardships, and sufferings, which they underwent; and that, not only without a motive, but in direct opposition to all the most powerful motives which heaven and earth, time and eternity, must have pre-sented to deter them from so preposterous a course!

Were we, however, to suppose them thus lost to all regard to their own happiness, as well as to every sentiment of piety and virtue, it must, nevertheless, have been impossible for them to have been successful in so wild and monstrous an un-dertaking.

It was not a transaction of some remote age, or distant obscure country, that constituted the subject of the apostolic testimony. No: it was in *Jerusalem*, the celebrated *Metropolis* of one of the best known countries on the face of the globe, that the apostles boldly asserted, and openly proclaim-ed the resurrection of Jesus Christ—in the very place where he had been crucified; and that but a few days after that tragical event. Why then did not the enemies of the Gospel re-fute this testimony? This, had the testimony been false, must have been a very easy task. A mere reference to the sepulchre

of Jesus, which, from the first day after his interment, had been guarded with the greatest precaution, must, in that case have been abundantly sufficient. Why then, instead of fruitless and vexatious prosecutions; did not the Jewish rulers go directly to his sepulchre, produce the body, and thus crush in embryo a religion which they held in the greatest abhorrence? The plain reason is, they could not do it. This is evident from their own representation of the case. “Say ye, was the direction of these rulers to the Roman soldiers,” “Say ye, that his disciples came by night and stole him away while we slept.”

But is it credible that the whole guard should be asleep at once, when for a Roman soldier to sleep at his post, was death by the Roman law? Or, were this admitted to be a possible case, is it credible that neither the approach of so desperate a band, nor the rolling away of the massy stone, and rifling the tomb, should have awakened any one of the numerous company? “His disciples came, and stole him away.”—For what purpose? That they might conduct his body to a funeral pile, with a view of having it reduced to ashes, and those ashes scattered to the four winds of heaven? No: but that they might pay him divine honors it would seem! Is this credible? Would disciples be disposed to pay such respect to the detested impostor? “His disciples came”—But is it possible that disciples who fled at the approach of his enemies to apprehend him, should have the courage to meditate so daring an attack upon so formidable a band of Roman soldiers? We think not. The story is doubtless a miserable fabrication. “While we slept”—A striking evidence, surely, of the resurrection of Christ. For it implies that neither the watch that guarded the sepulchre, nor the Jewish rulers, had any thing more than the most groundless and improbable conjectures, to oppose to the apostolic testimony, in this instance. It does more; it may be considered as good evidence that Jesus Christ was not to be found in the tomb; and this is nearly the same thing as to acknowledge, that he had risen from the dead: for there is no other conceivable way of accounting for this fact.

But we have still more irresistible evidence of this fundamental article of the christian faith. “Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high,” was the direction of Jesus to his apostles, just before his ascension. They did so, and were not disappointed. On the ever memorable day of Pentecost, this promise was signally fulfilled, and three thousand added to the rising church.

That great multitudes both of the Jews and Gentiles were converted to the christian faith, in the apostolic age, we

assuredly know. And how is this to be accounted for? In the heart of an impenitent sinner there is certainly a very strong opposition to the religion of Jesus Christ. To be convinced of this, it will not be necessary for us to have recourse to Calvary, or to any of the virulent persecutions which have been instituted against his followers. No! we need only attend upon a faithful gospel ministry in any christian denomination, and observe the *multitudes* who refuse to obey the gospel, at the same time that they *believe it to be true*. And this opposition must, in the apostolic age, have been greatly strengthened by some of the most deeply rooted prejudices incident to the heart of man. And can it reasonably be supposed that any mere unsupported assertions in favor of the religion of Jesus, would have been sufficient to overcome such powerful opposition, and to have transformed such multitudes of superstitious Jews and idolatrous Gentiles, into meek and humble disciples of a crucified redeemer? No! it must have required evidence that was plain and palpable, as well as irresistible; it must have required miraculous attestations. We might, it appears to us, go still farther, and affirm, that the preaching of the gospel in the apostolic age, must also have been attended with a supernatural and internal agency upon the heart, to arm it with such resistless and transforming efficacy. Miraculous exhibitions might averawe the transgressor, and produce some reformation in his external conduct. But there is no brilliance in a miracle, to enlighten a benighted mind, nor has it any power to renovate the heart.

Let it, however, only be granted that the gospel has ever been attended with any divine agency, in attestation of its truth, and we need require nothing more.

And can this be still a doubtful case? Take a view of the parties at issue. On the one side numbers, and wealth, and reputation, and learning, and power: and on the other, only a few poor, obscure, illiterate men; without any one natural qualification to enable them to cope with such formidable adversaries. Now let us suppose the apostolic testimony in favor of the resurrection of Christ to have been an absolute falsehood, and a falsehood of easy detection; what in that case would have been the result? Could christianity have maintained its ground in so unequal a contest? We might rather ask, could christianity in so unequal a contest have made such inroads upon the proud ranks of the enemy, and spread with such astonishing rapidity over the world? Certainly not.

Thus it evidently appears that the apostles could not have wished to deceive their fellow men in this instance; and that it would have been utterly out of their power to have done so, had they been base enough to have made the attempt. It is, therefore, impossible that they should have been *wilful deceivers*. And since, it has been shown, that they could not be deceived themselves, with respect to the facts which they have related and attested, it follows, by inevitable consequence, that the *religion of Jesus is true*—that He must be the Messiah of the Jews, and the Saviour of the world.

DOMESTIC.

Notices of the Proceedings of the GENERAL ASSEMBLY of the Presbyterian Church, holden at Philadelphia, May, 1818.

The committee to which was referred the overture from the Presbytery of New Brunswick, proposing the adoption of measures to restrain vice in general, and the intemperate use of ardent spirits in particular, reported and their report being read and amended, was adopted, and is as follows, viz.

That this Assembly recommend to the ministers, and all the people under their care, to use their influence in forming associations for the suppression of vice, and the encouragement of good morals.

That it be recommended to the ministers, elders, and deacons of the presbyterian churches, to refrain offering ardent spirits to those who may visit them at their respective houses, except in extraordinary cases.

Resolved, That the General Assembly recommend, and that they do hereby recommend to the pastors and sessions of the different churches under their care, to assemble, as often as they may deem necessary during the year, the baptized children, with their parents, to recommend said children in prayer to God, explain to them the nature and obligations of their baptism, and the relation which they sustain to the church.

The General Assembly, taking into consideration the great number of delegates that compose their body, and believing that a diminution of the number will contribute to equalize the representation from all our Presbyteries, as well as to facilitate the dispatch of business, and lessen the expence incurred by the commissioners; on motion,

Resolved, 1. That it be recommended to the Presbyteries to alter the ratio of representation, by substituting in chap. II. sec. 2. the word *nine* for the word *six*; and the word *eighteen* in place of the word *twelve*.

2. That the Presbyteries be required to send up to the next Gene-

ral Assembly, their respective decisions on the question submitted to their consideration in the above resolution.

The committee to which was referred the resolution on the subject of selling a slave, a member of the church, and which was directed to prepare a report to be adopted by the Assembly, expressing their opinion in general on the subject of slavery, reported, and their report being read, was unanimously adopted, and referred to the same committee for publication.

It is as follows, viz—

“ The General Assembly of the presbyterian church, having taken into consideration the subject of **SLAVERY**, think proper to make known their sentiments upon it to the churches and people under their care.

“ We consider the voluntary enslaving of one part of the human race by another, as a gross violation of the most precious and sacred rights of human nature; as utterly inconsistent with the law of God, which requires us to love our neighbor as ourselves; and as totally irreconcilable with the spirit and principles of the Gospel of Christ, which enjoin that, “ all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you do ye even so to them.” Slavery creates a paradox in the moral system—it exhibits rational, accountable, and immortal beings, in such circumstances as scarcely to leave them the power of moral action.—It exhibits them as dependent on the will of others, whether they shall receive religious instruction; whether they shall know and worship the true God; whether they shall enjoy the ordinances of the Gospel; whether they shall perform the duties and cherish the endearments of husbands and wives, parents and children, neighbors and friends; whether they shall preserve their chastity and purity, or regard

the dictates of justice and humanity. Such are some of the consequences of slavery,—consequences not imaginary—but which connect themselves with its very existence. The evils to which the slave is *always* exposed, often take place in fact, and in their very worst degree and form: and where all of them do not take place, as we rejoice to say that in many instances, through the influence of the principles of humanity and religion on the minds of masters, they do not—still the slave is deprived of his natural right, degraded as a human being, and exposed to the danger of passing into the hands of a master, who may inflict upon him all the hardships and injuries, which inhumanity and avarice may suggest.

“ From the view of the consequences resulting from the practice into which christian people have most inconsistently fallen, of enslaving a portion of their *brethren* of mankind—for “ God hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth”—it is manifestly the duty of all christians who enjoy the light of the present day, when the inconsistency of slavery, both with the dictates of humanity and religion, has been demonstrated, and is generally seen and acknowledged, to use their honest, earnest, and unwearied endeavors, to correct the errors of former times, and as speedily as possible to efface this blot on our holy religion, and to obtain the complete abolition of slavery throughout christendom, and if possible throughout the world.

“ We rejoice that the church to which we belong commenced, as early as any other in this country, the good work of endeavoring to put an end to slavery,* and that in the same

* In the minutes of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, for the year 1787, before the General Assembly was constituted, we find the following, viz.

“ The Synod of New York and Philadelphia, do highly approve of the general principles, in favor of universal liberty, that prevail in America; and

work, many of its members have ever since been, and now are, among the most active, vigorous, and efficient laborers. We do, indeed, tenderly sympathize with those portions of our church and country, where the evil of slavery has been entailed upon them; where a *great* and the *most virtuous part* of the *community* abhor slavery, and wish its extermination, as sincerely as any others—but where the number of slaves, their ignorance, and their vicious habits generally, render an immediate and universal emancipation inconsistent, alike, with the safety and happiness of the master and the slave. With those who are thus circumstanced, we repeat that we tenderly sympathize.—At the same time, we earnestly exhort them to continue, and, if possible, to increase their exertions to effect a total abolition of slavery.—We exhort them to suffer no greater delay to take place in this

of the interest which many of the states have taken in promoting the abolition of slavery: yet, inasmuch as men, introduced from a servile state to a participation of all the privileges of civil society, without a proper education, and without previous habits of industry, may be, in many respects, dangerous to the community: Therefore, they earnestly recommend it to all the members belonging to their communion, to give those persons who are, at present, held in servitude, such good education as may prepare them for the better enjoyment of freedom. And they, moreover, recommend, that masters, whenever they find servants disposed to make a proper improvement of the privilege, would give them some share of property to begin with; or grant them sufficient time and sufficient means of procuring, by industry, their own liberty, at a moderate rate; that they may, thereby, be brought into society with those habits of industry, that may render them useful citizens:—And finally, they recommend it to all the people under their care, to use the most prudent measures consistent with the interest and the state of civil society, in the parts where they live, to procure, eventually, the final abolition of slavery in America.

most interesting concern, than a regard to the public welfare *truly* and *indispensably* demands.

"As our country has inflicted a most grievous injury on the unhappy Africans, by bringing them into slavery, we cannot, indeed, urge that we should add a second injury to the first, by emancipating them in such manner as that they will be likely to destroy themselves or others. But we do think, that our country ought to be governed in this matter, by no other consideration than an honest and impartial regard to the happiness of the injured party; uninfluenced by the expense or inconvenience which such a regard may involve. We therefore warn all who belong to our denomination of christians, against unduly extending this plea of necessity; against making it a cover for the love and practice of slavery, or a pretence for not using efforts that are lawful and practicable, to extinguish the evil.

"*And we, at the same time, exhort others to forbear harsh censures, and uncharitable reflections on their brethren, who unhappily live among slaves, whom they cannot immediately set free; but who, at the same time, are really using all their influence, and all their endeavors, to bring them into a state of freedom, as soon as a door for it can be safely opened.*

"Having thus expressed our views of slavery, and of the duty indispensably incumbent on all christians to labor for its complete extinction, we proceed to recommend—(and we do it with all the earnestness and solemnity which this momentous subject demands)—a particular attention to the following points.

"We recommend to all our people to patronize and encourage the society, lately formed, for colonizing in Africa, the land of their ancestors, the free people of colour in our country. We hope that much good may result from the plans and efforts of this society. And while we exceedingly rejoice to have witnessed its origin and organization among the *holders of slaves*, as giving an unequivocal pledge of their desire to deliver themselves and their country

from the calamity of slavery; we hope that those portions of the American Union, whose inhabitants are by a gracious Providence, more favorably circumstanced, will cordially, and liberally, and earnestly co-operate with their brethren, in bringing about the great end contemplated.

"2. We recommend to all the members of our religious denomination, not only to permit, but to facilitate and encourage the instruction of their slaves, in the principles and duties of the christian religion; by granting them liberty to attend on the preaching of the gospel, when they have the opportunity; by favoring the instruction of them in Sabbath-Schools, wherever those schools can be formed; and by giving them all other proper advantages for acquiring the knowledge of their duty both to God and man. We are perfectly satisfied, that as it is incumbent on all christians to communicate religious instruction to those who are under their authority, so that the doing of this in the case before us, so far from operating, as some have apprehended that it might, as an excitement to insubordination and insurrection would, on the contrary, operate as the most powerful means for the prevention of those evils.*

* The following intelligence has been recently received, and may be relied on as authentic: "The legislature of Antigua, having held a conference with the Missionaries (of the United Brethren, commonly called Moravians) to induce them to extend their missions there, and finding it out of their power, voted them one thousand pounds to build a church and house, and three hundred pounds per annum, for the support of Missionaries at one station; granting and offering as much crown land as should be wanting for that or other stations; and in the dispatch to Lord Bathurst from the government of Antigua, it is stated that the legislature lamented that their limited finances prevented their doing more; as they were persuaded, that to the labours of those Missionaries among the negroes, they were mainly indebted for a state of

“ 3. We enjoin it on all church sessions and presbyteries, under the care of this Assembly, to discountenance, and, as far as possible, to prevent, all cruelty of whatever kind in the treatment of slaves; especially the cruelty of separating husband and wife, parents and children, and that which consists in selling slaves to those who will either themselves deprive these unhappy people of the blessings of the Gospel, or who will transport them to places where the Gospel is not proclaimed, or where it is forbidden slaves to attend upon its institutions.—The manifest violation or disregard of the injunction here given, in its true spirit and intention, ought to be considered as just ground for the discipline and censures of the church.—And if it shall ever happen that a christian professor, in our communion, shall sell a slave who is also in communion and good standing with our church, contrary to his or her will, and inclination, it ought immediately to claim the particular attention of the proper church judicature; and unless there be such peculiar circumstances attending the case as can but seldom happen, it ought to be followed, without delay, by a suspension of the offender from all the privileges of the church, till he repent, and make all the reparation in his power, to the injured party.”

From an enquiry made by a committee of the General Assembly, respecting the measures adopted by the several presbyteries for affording education to poor and pious youth for the Gospel Ministry, it appeared

profound tranquility, while other islands had been exposed to revolt and insurrection. The brethren have about twelve thousand negroes in their congregation on that island.”

that upwards of fifty young men are supported by the presbyteries, and are receiving instruction preparatory to their entering on the sacred office.

The board of Domestic Missionaries, have appointed thirty-six Missionaries to itinerate for a longer or shorter time during the year; making the whole service to be performed during the year by the missionaries equivalent to the labor performed by one man during one hundred and thirty seven months, or eleven years and five months—We rejoice to find this important work pursued with increasing zeal, by the Presbyterian church. We learn that the effect of Missionary labors last year was great—Many were turned from darkness to light, and from the power Satan to serve the living God.

Auxiliary to the Board of Missions, a number of societies has been formed, which, according to their means, employ Missionaries within their districts. Of these we have not received a detailed account; and cannot therefore present an accurate statement of the amount of domestic missionary service performed during the year.

While on the subject of domestic missions, we cannot deny ourselves the pleasure of recording the christian liberality of three ladies who very recently have sent, in the most private, and unostentatious way they could devise, donations to the Auxiliary Missionary Society, of Hanover Presbytery. Of these, one sent \$100; another \$50; and the third \$10. We should gladly record their names, for it has happened to us to know them; but we will not offend their delicacy by disclosures, which they have not authorised.

Fourteenth anniversary of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

On Wednesday, the sixth of May, 1818, was held at Free Masons' Hall, London, the fourteenth anniversary of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

Among the numerous and respectable assemblage, upon this interesting occasion, were, the bishops of Norwich, Gloucester, Cloyne, and Derry; their excellencies the ambassadors from the United States of America, and from his serene highness the Prince of Hesse Homburg; the Earl of Harrowby, Lord Gambier, the Right Hon. Nicholas Vansittart, M. P., Sir Thomas Dyke Acland, Bart. M. P., Thomas Babington, Esq. M. P., Joseph Butterworth, Esq. M. P., Charles Grant, Esq. M. P., Charles Grant, Jun. Esq. M. P., W. T. Money, Esq. M. P., William Wilberforce, Esq. M. P., Admiral Sir James Saumarez, Bart. K. G. C. B., &c.

Lord Teignmouth, in opening the business of the day, read a note from the bishop of Salisbury, at his Lordship's particular request, stating, that he was much mortified at being prevented, by illness, from attending the meeting.

An abstract of the Report was read by the Rev. W. Dealtry, from which it appeared that the Cash Account stood as follows:

Total net receipts, exclusive of sales,	<i>l. s. d.</i>
Of which sum, 55,857l.	
7s. 5d. was contributed by Auxiliary Societies.	
Received by sales, the major part of which was for Bibles and Testaments purchased by Associations,	18,620 19 9
	<hr/>
	86,979 10 11

Total net payments 71,099 1 7
That the issue of Bibles and Testaments, within the year, have been 89,795 Bibles, 104,306 Testaments; making the total issued by the British and Foreign Bible Society, in somewhat less than thirteen years, more than TWO MILLIONS of Bibles and Testaments.

We have only room to remark here, that a number of admirable speeches were delivered on this occasion; and to insert that of our minister at the court of St. James's.

His Excellency Mr. Rush, Envoy Extraordinary, and Minister Plenipotentiary, from the United States of America.

"I have been requested, since I came here this morning, by one of the officers of this Institution, to move that the thanks of this Meeting be given to the right honorable lord Teignmouth, President of this Society. Although sensible of my incompetency to this task, I feel, at the same time, that I cannot decline it. Nor can I help expressing the great and solid satisfaction which every bosom must feel at this Anniversary commemoration. Happily, there is a common ground upon which all the nations of the world, who make up the family of Christendom, can associate together; and it is a still happier and more consoling reflection, that it is a ground upon which they can always meet, and ought always to meet, as friends and as brothers. Kings, Emperors, Republics, whatever the grandeur or the means of their human sway, all look up to the same power, are all protected by the same almighty hand: the precepts and the truths contained in the Sacred Volume, which it is the great and the useful purpose of this Institution to disseminate, are such as command the spontaneous reverence of all nations: and why? Those precepts and those truths teach the maxims of charity and love, not merely between man and man, but taking a far more extensive range, they inculcate peace and good will between nation and nation. And hence, the representative of another nation, through a kindness so often extended to foreign ministers in this metropolis, is permitted to be present at such a celebration as this. I was a listener to the eloquent reflections with which the Report concluded. They are, they must be, true. The poets and orators of Britain may select, if they will, other topics of renown,

but in the sober records of the moralist and the historian, in the eyes of other nations, in the eyes of the great family of mankind, the establishment of the British and Foreign Bible Society will ever put forth the purest, the most incontestable title to the first praise.

I feel the force of those kind sentiments, in relation to the kindred Institution of the country to which I belong, to which the Report also has allusion: I felt grateful at the kind manner in which these sentiments were received. I am sure I shall but anticipate the wishes of the Bible Society of the United States, if I return their most grateful thanks. I felt with equal force and gratification, the sentiments uttered by the Right Honourable and distinguished Gentleman who first spoke. May the canvass of the two countries spread more extensively over the world the riches of Christian benevolence than it does the riches of commerce; and henceforth, may that be their only strife."

Society for propagating Christianity among the Jews.

The Two Anniversary Sermons for this Society were preached on Thursday Evening and Friday Morning, May 7th and 8th; the former by the Rev. Mr. Beachcroft, M. A. rector of Blunham, at St Ann's, Blackfriars; and the latter by the Rev. C. Simeon, M. A. of Cambridge, at St. Paul's Convent Garden. Immediately after the latter, was held the Anniversary Meeting at Freemason's Hall, Sir Thomas Baring in the chair, who opened the business, by explaining and enforcing the object of the Society.

Rev. Mr. Hawtrey then read the Report, which stated the progress of the Society in printing and distributing the New Testament in Hebrew, and the great interest excited among the Jews in foreign countries, partly thereby, and partly by the correspondence of the society, and by the foreign tour (at his own expense) of the Rev. Lewis Way, letters from whom mentioned his favorable reception of the Emperor Alexander, and the extraordinary

zeal he had expressed for the conversion of this interesting people.*

After reading the Report, the Reverend Basil Woodd introduced the Jewish children educated by this society (36 boys and 33 girls) who excited much sympathy and attention, by singing a short Anthem, in Hebrew, and in English a Song of Hosanna to Jesus Christ. The other speakers, on this occasion, were the Bishop of Gloucester, W. Wilberforce, Esq. Rev. M. Coxe, Lord Gambier, Rev. Mr. Owen, C. Grant, Esq. Rev. Edward Cooper, and Thomas Babington, Esq. The Rev. Messrs. Simeon and Beachcroft returned thanks in consequence of the acknowledgments voted to them by the society, as did also the chairman in the conclusion of the meeting.

* The income of the Society was stated at 9,284l. 17s. 6. and it was out of debt.

LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

The report of the proceedings of the directors for the past year, but considerably abridged, was read by the secretary, assisted by his son, the Rev. H. F. Burder.

The Treasurer then presented a detailed account of the receipts and disbursements of the society for the year ending March 31, 1818. Not having room for particulars, we can now only state the gross amount of the receipts from Subscriptions, Collections, &c. which is 22,132l. 1s. 6½d.

Dr. Bogue then moved, that the report be received, approved, and printed, according to the discretion of the Directors.

We met in this place at the commencement of the Society, in the year 1795. Those of us that were then present, may recollect what were then our feelings. And what are they now? Have we been disappointed? No; far from it. We have reason to adore the goodness of God, that the Saviour has smiled upon our undertaking, and displayed his highest approbation of it. What has been contained in the report presents to us a most delightful scene. And, that report is strengthened

by letters which I have received from the Missionaries themselves ; and when I read of their diligence in learning languages, of their zeal in preaching, of their pains in translating the scriptures, and their care to circulate tracts, and to establish schools ; and of their interesting journeys to distant places to preach the gospel ; I count it a matter of the liveliest joy. I have no fear relating to ultimate success. Here are the means employed, and the promise of God has secured to us his blessing.

But while we have the joy of witnessing extensive and diligent labours, we have also the joy of remarkable success. What a scene is presented in 'the Society Isles'—the most unlikely of the human race, for savageness, sensuality, and every thing that degrades the human character—the most unlikely people, according to all human appearance, to be converted. What praise is due to those men who waited so patiently, and did not wait in vain. And now such a scene is presented as the world has not of late years bro't to view. Idolatry is renounced ; fifty places of worship have been erected in the island of Taheite alone ; and the other islands are embracing the gospel : casting away their gods, which are no gods : the Sabbath is observed—family worship attended to : thousands learning to read. What a picture !—what spiritual glory !—what delightful prospects ! Who after this, will doubt the success of missions, and say, 'the time is not come for the Lord's house to be built ?'

The accounts from South Africa contain likewise the most pleasing prospects. They present to us the rudest of the human race, in various places, embracing the gospel, cultivating their fields, becoming rational beings, as well as christians ; and advancing their comfort in this world, while they enjoy a prospect of happiness in the world to come. O ! what a blessing is the gospel to mankind even in the present life.

We have great encouragement to proceed, and ground of congratulation, in what our eyes have seen, as

to the labours and success of the Missionaries, and that the spirit of the christian world has been aroused to unite in this work of advancing the kingdom of Christ. How many societies have sprung up since ours ! We have stirred up the spirit of christians abroad—In Holland, in Switzerland, in Germany, and above all in America ! And how many have been stirred up at home ? One denomination and class has been establishing a Missionary Society after another, until, shall I say ? the last has now appeared : and the dignitaries of the established church are preparing, on a large and extensive scale, to send Missionaries to India and Ceylon. May God give them success ! Who will speak against missions now, and call them enthusiastic ? It is no small thing that the minds and dispositions of men are so changed ; if we go on, at this rate we know not where we shall stop ; there will be the adding of one thing to another, until that glorious season, when all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. We are now surrounded by many other Missionary Societies : and that consideration imposes duties upon us, to behave aright to those that are members of the same family. Here let us not be wanting. We shall go straight forward in the path of duty, and not be justled out of the way by any, but pursue those methods we consider the gospel teaches us, in order to carry on our plans, for the advancement of the cause of Christ in the world. But while we do this, let us shew a pleasant disposition to others. Let us beware of boasting—let us not cry, We are the people—we are the fittest to translate the scriptures, and promote missions. Away with such contemptible boastings as these ! Let us, with humility and gratitude, acknowledge all the success with which God is pleased to favor us, but let there be no spirit of boasting. Nor should there be any detracting from others. We are not rivals, we are fellow-labourers of the same Lord, and should have the spirit of brethren. How mean should we be, saying, Such a Missionary Society

has this bad thing, and the other bad thing—away with such a spirit as this. There will be faults in Missionaries of all denominations; all will have their mistakes, and they will become wiser by the events that occur.

Let us seek to maintain a spirit of good will to all. I endeavor to inculcate on the Missionaries a liberal spirit, free, affectionate; to act according to their own judgment; not to be warped by any, but to maintain affection to all. And I desire them not to shew a mean, paltry spirit—to proselyte others, in foreign countries; to their own peculiar opinions in lesser matters; but to consider others as brethren, to let them follow their own judgment; and to act in all things with a dignity that becomes the servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are peculiarly called to this, because our society is not a *Sectarian* society, but a *Christian* one, grounded on the general

principles of the gospel. We send not out Missionaries to establish any one sect or denomination, but to form their converts according to that method they think most agreeable to the word of God. As then we stand on 'vantage ground as to the liberality of our principles, let it be manifested in the liberality of our conduct. If we are to have any emulation, let it be to excel. If we can excel in a laudable, christian way, then we do right. Let us seek to excel in the wisdom of our plans, in the choice of our fields of labour, in the piety and qualifications of our Missionaries—and, above all, let us labour to excel in the fervour of our prayer, that the glorious gospel may be spread from the rising to the setting of the sun; and that our Missionaries may have a double portion of the Spirit upon them, and their labours be crowned with the most extensive success.

— — —

NOTE BY THE EDITOR.

This number of the Magazine, has been delayed for a few days in consequence of the Editor being called, for a week or two, into the country. The general appearance of that section of the state, through which he travelled, was highly gratifying. Many tokens of improvement in the mode of cultivating land, are exhibited; and, what is still more pleasing, a spirit of improvement is growing through the country. This is delightful. It is one efficient means of promoting attachment to the soil. And we are persuaded that this affection has a most powerful moral effect. We have long mourned over the ruin produced in Virginia, by a shortsighted regard to present gains, without consulting the lasting interest of the state. Hillsides deeply seamed with gullies, and plains closely covered with sombre pine are unseemly sights. We hope for a change. Indeed it is now rapidly taking place; and we trust that it will go on with accelerated velocity. The increase of individual wealth by means of the melioration of the soil, and the consequent increase of its produce, adds to the resources of the country, to the general comfort of its inhabitants, and if we mistake not, does no injury to the morals of the community. Directly the reverse in all its influences, is the accumulation of great *fortunes* by speculation. It lessens general prosperity, while individuals grow enormously rich; and, as far as it prevails, destroys all the fine feelings which promote social enjoyment, and all the habits connected with the permanent prosperity of a nation.

Heaven seems to have smiled on the labours of the farmer and planter in Virginia. The fields are literally loaded with the crops of corn; the land laughs with abundance. How loud the call for gratitude! Surely we may adopt the language of the Psalmist, and say, "He hath not dealt so with any other people."